Q&A Proof of Concept call in Materials Science for sustainability 2026

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If there is an international team, e.g. Sweden-US, would that result in a lower score due to the international nature?

Not per se, however, the link and the benefit to Sweden shall be clear.

Can an individual researcher from outside Sweden apply?

Eligible to apply are scientists that are employed at a Swedish university.

Is it OK if a co-applicant, i.e. not the main PI/applicant, lacks grants from a Wallenberg Foundation or a relevant KAW-programme connection?

Yes, this is OK. The main applicant must full-fill the eligibility criteria's, co-applicants need not to.

We are a constellation of 3 people applying for the project. Shall the other 2 participants be listed as co-applicants in the online submission form? If yes, should their CV be attached and where?

Yes, include the other two persons as co-applicants. Include their CV in a combined single pdf file. PI should be the main applicant, i.e. not post-doc or assistant.

How important is the track record of the applicant vs the project proposal?

The focus is on the innovation and not on the academic track record of the applying scientist. You just need to be able to describe a credible science-based innovation. New entrepreneurs are most welcome to apply, so entrepreneurial experience is not required.

Can we submit a proposal around a product which was already supported by an ERC proof of-concept grant?

Yes, you can apply even though you already have an ERC PoC grant but the differences should be clear and distinguished.

Is it an advantage to have funding from other sources, e.g. VR?

Funding from additional sources is not part of the evaluation process, however, it is important to clarify how the PoC grant contribute compared to other funding streams.

What TRL stage should the project address?

Project at TRL stage of 2-4, i.e. they should not be too early. Please look at the WISE Readiness Level scale here.

Will submitted applications be public documents like in VR?

No. The applications will be handled by KAW and will not be public documents. Applications will be protected by confidentiality. The reviewers will have to sign a confidentiality agreement before receiving the applications.

Will WISE or KAW provide template confidentiality agreements?

WISE or KAW will not provide confidentiality agreements. Please contact your university's innovation office for support.

What IP form is expected for a technology implemented in a software?

You should describe this in the very same way as any innovation, including the market, unique positioning and opportunity of your product, the IP etc. Usually IP is the code itself, so indicate how the software was developed, means of protection and who owns it.

Can the PoC funding be used to fund application for IP protection/patent application.

No, the grant cannot finance IP protection/patent applications.

Could you please specify in detail how the grant may be used (salary, new team member, reagents, equipment, local cost, overhead, travel costs, and software licences) and therefore what can be included in the budget?

KAW allows for 20% of granted amount to be used for indirect costs and rent. Yes, you can use the grant for what is mentioned above, however, if you use the grant for salary, it must be in line with the rules and regulations at your university.

Can an academic researcher apply if the IP already has been transferred to a startup company?

No. An academic researcher can apply, however, not for the IP that has been transferred to the startup company. She/he can apply for a project generating new IP.

Can an academic lab apply even if a spin-off company around the proposed product has been created recently even though the final product is not fully defined/validated/commercialized?

The academic lab can apply even though they have a company, however there should be a clear scientific question. The grant is purely academic so there needs to be a distinguished line between the academic work that is connected to the project in the application, and the ongoing work in the company.

If a researcher is already involved in a start-up, can he/she still participate with an early phase project if this will be conducted in their labs?

Yes. The grant is purely academic, however, a researcher already involved in a startup can still apply. In this case, the researcher should clearly state the scientific question and the link to academia.

If a start-up company have the methodology, can the PoC be used for a case study developing a product using this methodology?

The grant shall not overlap with something that is clearly product development in a company setting. It is important to describe both the content and the context of the PoC and if there is already commercial activity associated with the innovation.

What is the composition of the evaluation committee?

The Evaluation committee has been selected within the WISE and KAW community. All reviewers must sign a confidentiality agreement.

What happens during the coaching step?

During the coaching step, the WALP team at KAW will discuss the suggested actions and budget and support the framing of the idea, in order to create the best case for the pitch session and the final WALP selection. Not all projects entering the coaching process necessarily get funded.

Is it OK to use the funds for engaging services or recruiting staff in a different European country?

The grant should not be a means to recruit staff to the lab. Moreover, the connection and benefit for Sweden shall be clearly explained.

Is it possible to apply if the start-up has been formally initiated?

Yes, but that the grant can’t be used for product development. It shall be used to answer remaining scientific questions related to e.g. scalability or robustness.

Is a Letter of Intent from the industry required to demonstrate the industry interest?

No, an informal expression of the interest is sufficient. E.g. an e-mail showing the interest from a company.

Does an industrial participant need to provide in-kind contribution?

The grant is a purely scientific grant to a university and cannot go directly to an industry partner. The participation by an industrial partner must be an in-kind contribution, unless the university has a collaboration agreement and can pay for consultancy services.

Can a university who is not part of WISE but in KAW umbrella apply for the grant?

Yes, researchers with grants from KAW can apply. The application however needs to be in the field of materials science for sustainability.

If you are applying together with someone, do you need certificates from both heads of department?

No, only the university that will receive the grant needs to provide the certificate.

Can the industry interest come from a company outside Sweden?

Yes.

Can external services be used for carrying out the project?

Yes, if the service is necessary for answering the scientific hypothesis and the supplier of the service is procured by the university.

Can an initial idea be funded by this grant?

The idea needs to have a certain maturity and good research results have been shown.

Is SLU eligible for application?

The eligibility is determined by the PI, if he/she presently has or previously had funding from KAW. Eligibility is described in the call text.

I am a WISE fellow, how much salary support can I put for myself through a WISE POC project?

Since you are a WISE Fellow and is 100% funded from KAW, you can't add more funding for your own salary. The PoC-budget can for example contain salary for other team members, consumables or other costs necessary for performing the project, as described in the call text.

Can the project time be extended to 3 years for covering depreciation costs for equipment purchases?

No, the grant can cover costs up to maximum two years project time.

Can you apply with the same application for more than one KAW PoC call during the same year?

No. If you are uncertain about which KAW PoC call you should submit your application to, please contact sandor.albrecht@kaw.se.

Can the grant be used to test a methodology?

Yes, but a good grasp of the technology should be there. Relevant questions are e.g. how to scale, investigation of robustness or modification of a material. But don't apply for something you know works.

Should the focus of a project be the material or can it be the integration of a material into a device?

Both alternatives are OK. Integration in a device (up to system level) can be funded. The project shall be scientific; what scientific questions need to be answered to make the technology ready for investment?

We have an existing company including IPR, with previous funding from WALP, can we apply for a new project targeting a different aspect of materials for the same application?

Yes, but it needs to concern a different task or show a clear advancement from previous work. Not an incremental development of previous work.