

Q&A KAW & SciLifeLab Proof of Concept Grant in Life Sciences

Updated 2025.02.21 (First version 2024.01.24, revised 2024.12.19, revised 2025.02.17, revised 2025.12.02)

I have used SciLifeLab infrastructure, am I eligible for this grant?

No, being one of the 4 000 projects that SciLifeLab infrastructure processes annually does not guarantee eligibility.

I have received a DDLS/WAPS industrial doctoral student project, am I eligible for this grant?

Supervisors of DDLS PhD students are eligible, if a) the suggested innovation stems directly from one of the DDLS/WASP area of research, and b) the IP is not linked to an industrial partner

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?

The main applicant has to be employed in Sweden at an academic institution. The co-PIs can be international, but not recipients of the funding/salary support. In the case of international situations, please always explain the benefit to Sweden and the protection/preservation of the IP in Sweden.

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

Yes, this is OK. The main applicant must full-fill the eligibility criteria, 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.

I work at a laboratory facility established thanks to a donation from KAW, am I eligible to apply?

Members of Wallenberg laboratories or institutions, where KAW does not currently have an active role are not eligible for applying to the KAW proof-of-concept grants.

What applies to clinical researchers that are employed by the region/ University hospital but are affiliated with and conduct their research at the university. Are they eligible to apply as long as their department head provides approval, or must the researcher have their primary employment at the university?

Active clinical scientists who meet the KAW funding requirements and who share their working time between university and hospital work are welcome to apply even if their percentage of work at a university is less than the 70%. The PoC funding should, however, be placed at a university. The scientist should explain how IP is handled considering their joint academic and hospital appointments.

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.

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 SciLifeLab and KAW provide template confidentiality agreements?

SciLifeLab and KAW will not provide confidentiality agreements. Contact your local innovation office for support: <https://www.scilifelab.se/external-relations/innovation/#h-innovation-coaching>

How can I identify an external partner who can verify the potential commercial value of the product?

Contact your local innovation support office for guidance, see link above.

SciLifeLab and KAW do not provide matchmaking in this regard. It is important to define the value beyond academia. Take care not to disclose confidential information.

Regarding external party validation, does that not interfere with potential IP and patent protection?

It is important to learn how to explain the uniqueness without disclosing confidential details. Contact your local innovation offices to get support, guidance and templates for agreements, see link above.

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 applications 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 the 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.

Will this grant be coordinated with support from the innovation offices?

No. Individual applications will not be coordinated with the innovation offices; however, the innovation offices have been alerted about this grant program and they will provide support to applicants when possible. We encourage the applicants to contact the local innovation office. KAW will not notify the innovation offices of the approved or declined applications. Awarded scientists are free to notify their innovation offices.

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

Yes, it can be possible unless the IP is already being exploited /commercialized or the startup has attracted external funding

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 start-up can still apply. In this case, the researcher should clearly state the scientific question and the link to academia.

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

The grant should 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 advisory committee has been selected from experts in the life science communities in Sweden. No international or industry representatives are included. All reviewers must sign a confidentiality agreement. The subsequent WALP panel is defined by KAW in a separate process.

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 can be used for paying for required commercial or academic services from national or international sources, including companies and universities. However, the grant should not be used to recruit or employ staff abroad. In all cases, the connection and benefit to Sweden shall be clearly explained.

You mentioned before the possibility of hiring consultants. But if the grant does not cover innovation analysis, they will not cover a regulation expert, correct?

Correct. The grant does not cover innovation analysis. However, it can cover salary for regulation experts if the experts are procured (upphandlade) by your university.

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?

Researchers with grants from KAW can apply. See eligibility criteria described in the call text

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, submit your question using the webform: <https://www.scilifelab.se/question-form-for-kaw-scilifelab-proof-of-concept-call/>