HANDBOOK OPEN CALL 2015
1.0 INTRODUCTION

This handbook is for applicants applying for funding from the Swedish Farmers’ Foundation for Agricultural Research (SLF), as well as for members of SLF sector groups and review panels. SLF supports research where proximity to the entrepreneur and the beneficial perspectives of the research must be integrated and associated with research of high scientific quality. This handbook contains guidelines about the process from application to completed project and describes what is expected of the applicant and the reviewer.

The handbook is divided into 2 sections:
- Instructions for applicants
- Instructions for evaluation

The handbook is intended to provide assistance when writing applications and during the review phases. Contact the SLF Secretariat if you require further assistance.

News for 2015
- The applicants must, with help from the “Innovation-wheel” and the “Knowledge Chain”, clearly describe who the recipient of the results are.
- Every project shall consist of a minimum of applicants from two different organisations
- The profitability potential from the projects must be described.

1.1 FOCUS AREAS

SLF funds research that will lead to tangible benefits and increased growth and competitiveness for Sweden’s farmers. SLF distributes research funding that has been contributed by the sector, together with state co-funding. This means that the research that is funded must be of benefit to farmers. For that reason applied research is funded in the first instance rather than purely basic research. However, the scientific quality must be high, although benefit and relevance are always decisively important for the project to be granted funding.

By interdisciplinary and collaborative research SLF emphasises that applicants should strive to bring together stakeholders from different sector areas, subject areas and disciplines. A holistic approach to issues that concern the opportunities and challenges for the agricultural/horticultural sectors is essential in order to find solutions to the major sustainable society challenges, such as food security, climate change and antibiotic resistance.

SLF will focus on applied research efforts within four thematic research areas: Energy & Biomass, Food & Feed, Management, and Climate & Environment. The four focus areas are presented as a
matrix model, as the areas overlap each other (Figure 1). Read more about the SLF Research and Development Programme 2014:

WWW.LANTBRUKSFORSKNING.SE.

All of the four areas contain crucial challenges, innovation needs and business opportunities for every sector and individual business within the agricultural/horticultural sectors. Through collaboration with academia and commercial interests SLF has identified a number of challenges. Common to all of these challenges is that they describe several essential or crucial needs within agriculture/horticulture; needs that must be solved through collaborations between many stakeholders within academia and the industry.

1.2 RESEARCH MODEL – "THE KNOWLEDGE CHAIN"

To assure benefit for the individual horticultural business or farmer it is important that the entire knowledge chain functions well. The Swedish Farmers' Foundation for Agricultural Research has therefore developed a research model, "The Knowledge Chain", for commercial farming and
horticulture (Figure 2). SLF will prioritise projects that concern applied research, conceptualisation and demonstration.

The goal of SLF is that projects must focus on benefit to the farmer. The application must describe which research stakeholders farther along the knowledge chain will be the recipients of the future research results and how knowledge will be disseminated to the next link in the chain. The model clarifies which stakeholders and collaborations are necessary, in both directions along the knowledge chain, in order to achieve the maximum possible benefit from the research.

SLF encourages having several different collaborative stakeholders involved in each project, preferably representatives from academia, the farming sector, companies and extension service organisations. The latter have key roles, both as the transferee of new knowledge that benefits farmers and as the communicators of the needs of farmers to the research community. The goal is that sector representatives shall be involved already from the start of a project concept, not just as a reference group but preferably as a participating partner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Link in the chain</th>
<th>Energy &amp; Biomass</th>
<th>Climate &amp; Environment</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluation**
Assessment of the profitability of launched systems and products for the farming sector.

**Product development**
Development of new systems and products for the farming sector.

**Demonstration**
Demonstrations/trials that show the possibilities that exist for ready solutions to agricultural and horticultural challenges and needs.

**Concept development**
Develop ideas and suggestions for the possibilities of solutions to farming sector challenges and needs, based on the results of the applied research.

**Applied research**
Systematic research based on the challenges and needs of the farming sector.
Basic research | Fundamental and curiosity-based research with no direct application in mind.

1.3 ETHICAL GUIDELINES

The ethical guidelines are intended as a guide for everyone participating in SLF operations: sector evaluators and review panel members, SLF Secretariat employees and SFL Board evaluators.

When performing reviews personal considerations or preferences must not result in biased reviews of applications, research grant awards or research priorities.

The people working with the research project must themselves evaluate and openly declare any associations that may be of importance to impartial review of research grant applications. A high standard of personal integrity is expected.

During the review process the scientific credibility must be supported by a factual assessment of the application. In the opinion statement the assessment of the application must be formulated factually and fairly and must as objectively as possibly state the strengths and weaknesses of the applicants and the application.

Information provided by researchers via submission of applications or equivalent may not be used to benefit the research of the reviewer or provide personal scientific advantage or scientific advantage for colleagues, to the detriment of the operations of others.

Swedish legislation and European Provisions must be observed and adhered to in the review process. This applies to research and professional ethical regulations and legislation that have been established by other organisations (such as animal protection regulations, plant protection regulations, regulations concerning the spread of infection and regulations for transgenic organisms). It must be particularly stressed that for applications that contain elements that require evaluation by an ethics review board, approval must be issued by the relevant board and must be presented before the project can begin. The application must contain verification that the relevant ethical applications have been submitted, or will be submitted.

The applications are not a matter of public disclosure and must be handled accordingly. The reviewers have a responsibility to the review panel, which means that review panel discussions may not be further communicated to an outside party. The decisions taken by the review panel are the collective decision of all review panel members. Review panel members have the right to object to decisions taken at the review meeting.

If a reviewer recognises during the review process that he or she has a conflict of interest, this is recorded in the review system. A similar process is followed if a reviewer is appointed as a rapporteur and a conflict of interest arises. A corresponding entry is recorded in the review system and the SLF Secretariat must be notified immediately. If a conflict of interest is discovered during a meeting that is in progress, this must be reported without delay. The reviewer has personal liability in a case of conflict of interest. SLF endeavours to work in a way that creates trust, both on behalf of
the finance providers and on behalf of the grant recipients. A reviewer for whom a conflict of interest exists must be regarded as non-participatory in the meeting and must leave the room.

Conflict of interest is considered to occur in the following instances and is governed by the Swedish Code of Statutes Administrative Procedure Act (§11 and 12, 1986:23):

- The matter concerns the panel member or a person close to the panel member, or the outcome of the matter can be expected to result in significant advantage or disadvantage for the panel member or a person close to the panel member.
- The panel member or a person close to the panel member is a representative of, or works at, the same department or company as the applicant, or is a representative of another party for whom the outcome of the matter may result in significant advantage or disadvantage.
- The panel member has an ongoing or recently completed collaboration with the applicant. There is also conflict of interest if any other particular circumstance exists that may influence the credibility that a panel member is impartial in the matter. Examples of such circumstances are friendship, rivalry or financial dependence.
- The panel member must personally consider if there is a conflict of interest and notify any conflict of interest that exists. If conflict of interest exists the panel member must abstain from the administration and processing of the application and leave the meeting room during discussions concerning the application.
FROM CALL TO RESULT

STEP 1
Concept overview

STEP 2
Full-scale application

Open Call

Decision

Bedömning av branschgrupp

Decision

Bedömning av beredningsgrupp

Contract and payout

Deveation report

Dissemination of results!

Final report

Rejection with observations

Rejection
1.5 APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Project requirements

The project must include stakeholders from the knowledge chain, such as academia, agribusinesses, other companies and extension service organisations. Each project should comprise applicants from at least two organisations.

A description of which research stakeholders further along the knowledge chain should be the recipients of the future research results and how knowledge will be disseminated to the next link in the chain.

A description of how the project will benefit the farming sector. It is important that the results come to be used in practice by commercial stakeholders and contribute to the development and competitiveness of the agribusiness sector.

A choice of one or more sector areas has to be made: meat, milk, poultry, sugar, potatoes, horticulture, plant breeding, energy & biomass.

2. Concept overview

The description of the project may not exceed 3 pages and must be written in Swedish.

3. Concept overview submission

Submit the application electronically using the Swedish Farmers' Foundation for Agricultural Research application system.

4. Full-scale application

If the application progresses to Step 2 in the process a full-scale application must be submitted. The project description may not exceed 10 pages and must be written in English.

5. Application submission

Submit the application electronically using SLF’s application system.

Remember that a scanned letter of assurance from your organisation that awarded funding will be administered must be included in Step 2.
2.0 INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS

2.1 Application

The application system opens at least one month before the closing date for application, which is notified via the website. For your application to be considered to be valid and reviewed correctly it is important to follow the steps described below. Before the application can be written you must create a login account.

The Swedish Farmers’ Foundation for Agricultural Research will announce one open call during 2014.

2.2 Concept overview and full-scale application

Concept overview

Appendix 1

A project description in Swedish with a focus on the benefits for the industry, position in the knowledge chain, project group members, dissemination of results and budget framework. Maximum 3 pages. Use a standard typeface and standard font size.

Full-scale application

Appendix 1

A project description in English describing position in the knowledge chain, dissemination of results, benefits for the farming sector, project group members, reference group, detailed budget, materials and methods. Maximum 10 pages.

Appendix 2

CV including list of publications.

Maximum 2 pages per applicant.

2.3 Web form

The web form for new applications consists of one page that contains several section tabs in the main menu bar. All of the section fields must be completed and saved before the application can be submitted. When the page is saved correctly the respective section tab in the main form menu bar will be displayed in green. It is possible to make changes to the application during the entire application period, up until the application is submitted. On the pages that concern the project budget the amounts must always be stated in SEK.
2.3.1 Information about the applicants

This page is used to state the main applicant and co-applicants for the project. Applicants from universities or university colleges should hold a doctoral degree. For doctoral student projects the main applicant must be the supervisor of the doctoral student.

2.3.2 Project information

State the year and month of the planned project start and completion. The date for submission of the final report is automatically set as six months after the stated completion date for the project. Here you also select which focus area your project application shall be processed under and the sector area the project concerns. The project title, which must be stated both in English and Swedish, should be brief and concise and may be a maximum of 100 characters, including blank spaces.

2.3.3 Economics

This is an overview of how the project is intended to be financed. All amounts are stated in SEK. If the project has been awarded funding by other grant awarding bodies this must be stated on this page. This applies also to any personal resources that will be invested in the project. If project funding applications have been made for alternative funding, that is to say for the same costs as those sought from SLF, this must also be stated here. The budget must be justified in the project description.

A budget framework that provides an indication of the level of the final annual budget for the project must be stated in the concept overview. The framework budget does not need to specify details of financial posts and changes to the project group are permitted prior to submission of the full-scale application.

The full-scale application must include a specified budget with all costs for the part of the project intended to be funded by SLF. For all project positions the name of the person responsible must be stated. State the amounts in percent of a full-time position and then the monthly salary. State the number of months that the individuals will work on the project during a specific year under months.

Remember to be specific and clear about the specification of materials, travel and additional costs. Posts stated as "other materials" or "miscellaneous costs" will not be accepted. Salaries for positions other than that of the main applicant or co-applicants are stated under additional costs. The name of the position must always be stated.

Overhead costs may maximally equate to 25 percent of the entire sum applied for, including salaries, and include faculty, department and university overhead costs as well as costs for premises.

2.3.4 Summary of the research project

Summarise the objectives and focus of the project in Swedish and English. Each summary must not exceed 1000 characters, including blank spaces. Remember that the text will be published automatically in the project bank on the website of the Swedish Farmers' Foundation for Agricultural Research if funding is awarded.
2.3.5 Appendices for the concept overview

Appendix 1: The project description may not exceed 3 pages and must be written in Swedish. The description must include:

The purpose and objectives of the research project.

Justification for the position of the project in the knowledge chain.

The benefits of the project for the industry.

Justification for the composition of the project group.

A brief overview of the materials and methods of the project.

Justification for the budget.

A brief description of how the results of the project will be disseminated and communicated to recipients, as well as which channels will be used.

Note that you do not need to enclose any assurance of administration of funding from your organisation when you submit the concept overview (Step 1). This is first submitted together with the full-scale application (Step 2).

2.3.6 Appendices for the full-scale application

Appendix 1: The project description may not exceed 10 pages and must be written in English. The description must include:

The purpose and objectives of the research project.

A description of the theory, methods and performance, as well as key references.

Ethical considerations.

The benefits of the project for the agribusiness sector.

Justification for the position of the project in the knowledge chain.

Justification for the composition of the project group.

National and international collaborations.

An overview of potential reference group or the names and functions of reference individuals.

Justification for the budget.

Plan for scientific publication and dissemination of information.

Plan for communication with interested parties, the industry and the sector.
Appendix 2: CV, including publication list, not exceeding 2 pages per applicant. A brief description of the merits of the main applicant and co-applicants, together with any publication lists. Bear in mind that only information relevant to the project should be mentioned.

2.4 Register the application

When all application pages have been saved and each section tab in the main menu bar of the application form displays green, submit the application by clicking the "Register the application" command. Do not forget to read through the General application requirements and accept the terms by clicking the appropriate box.

For full-scale applications an assurance from your organisation that the grant funding will be administered is required, signed by the head of department or immediate superior. Print out the form template that is available via the link in the system, complete the form, scan it and enclose it as an appendix with your application. The application cannot be submitted without complete, correctly filled in web forms and an enclosed assurance from the administrative organisation.

All reviews will be performed electronically via the system, which means that the sector groups and review panels only have access to the material that is submitted electronically.

2.5 Decision

Following the decision of the sector group a mail will be sent out inviting the applicants selected to progress to Step 2 to submit a full-scale application. A mail will also be sent out to inform the applicants who have not been successful. For full-scale applications, projects that have been awarded funding will be published on the SLF website one to two weeks after the decision of the SLF’s Research Board. Following the decision a funding contract or letter of rejection will be sent to all applicants informing of the justification for the decision. Decisions may not be appealed.

2.6 Projects awarded funding

If the project has been awarded funding the main applicant will receive a contract where information about who will administer the grant funding must be entered on the reverse side. Here details of the organisation that will administer and manage the grant must be stated. In certain circumstances a project granted funding may require to be supplemented by provision of further information before the first grant payment can be made. This will be clearly stated in the contract and means that the main applicant must submit the requested supplementary information before the stated date.

2.7 The contract

Remember to state the bank account number or PlusGiro number and address text. The grant contract will also state the payment plan for the entire project. The contract will also state the date of submission for the final project report. The main applicant must send one copy of the signed contract to the SLF Secretariat. The other copy of the contract should be retained by the main applicant.
2.8 During an ongoing project

2.8.1 Deviation report

SLF awards grant funding for the entire project duration. Payment of grants for multi-year projects requires submission of a deviation report to the SLF Secretariat if there are changes to the project. Justification for the deviation must be provided. Deviation reporting guarantees that the research funding is used correctly and that the research maintains a high level of quality.

If the project has not changed then you only need to describe how the project is following the time plan, as well as the results that have been generated.

2.8.2 Main applicant and co-applicants

The main applicant, who is automatically the registered login owner of the application account, is the person responsible for ensuring that the project proceeds according to plan, that deviation reports are submitted when necessary and that the final project report is submitted at the appointed time. It is the main applicant who is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of all financial reporting to SLF. Contact information is obtained directly from the account via the web form. Make sure that the information is always current. If the main applicant leaves or retires SLF must be notified of this.

2.8.3 Deferral

If you are not able to submit project reports according to the original time schedule you must submit an application for deferral to the SLF Secretariat. The application for deferral must clearly explain the reason for the delay and must contain a new time schedule. Deferral will be granted only when exceptional circumstances exist.

You must submit final reports for all of your projects according to the current time schedule and on time in order to be able to apply for funding for new projects.

2.8.4 Final report

Final reports must be submitted for all projects funded by SLF. The final report will be published in a project bank on SLF’s website and will be used as a basis for dissemination of the results to the industry and sector. If the final report is not received following repeated reminders the project will be annulled and any surplus funding remaining must be repaid to SLF. The project will then not be published in the Project Bank on SLF’s website.

2.8.5 Publication

When a final report has been approved it will be published in SLF’s Project Bank. The Project Bank will contain the contact details of the main applicant. You should therefore be prepared for questions that may arise following publication.

There is a possibility to request deferral of publication of the final report in the Project Bank if publication is likely to obstruct the planned publication of a scientific article, or patent application. Contact the SLF Secretariat in such instances.
When you as the applicant publish results from your project you must always state that SLF has funded the project. The SLF Secretariat can answer questions about how this should be complied with.

2.9 How to write a final report

The final report is submitted using the SLF application system, no later that the date stated on your grant funding contract. The form on the website must be completed in the order stated on the form, Section 1 first, then Section 2 etc. The financial section is completed last. The fields that you are not permitted to change, for example the title field etc. are displayed in grey and cannot be accessed.

The web form consists of the following four sections:

Financial report

In the financial report the applicant details all of the project costs incurred. It is important that this report is coupled to the budget that was stated in the original application. Do not forget to specify the individual posts, so that costs are not reported as a lump sum.

Summary

You must summarize the project in both Swedish and English. In summarizing the project you must clearly state what has been done and, above all else, the results that have been obtained. Neither of the project summaries must not exceed 1000 characters, including blank spaces. The summaries will be published automatically in the SLF’s Project Bank when the project is approved.

Popular science report

In the popular science report you have one page in which to explain:

- The benefits provided by the project.
- The results obtained.
- How the results were achieved.

Your target audience will be primarily farmers, journalists, advisers or other parties interested in the subject matter, but who lacks your scientific competence and specialist knowledge. Therefore you must use simple and clear language. This is an excellent opportunity to disseminate knowledge about a subject you are passionate about.

Read more about how to write this report in section 2.10 Guidelines for writing popular science reports.

The report may not exceed 4000 characters, including blank spaces.

Final report

The final report is uploaded in the system as a PDF file attachment. The report may not exceed a size of 10 pages and 3 MB. Projects granted funding prior to and including 2013 may submit the final report in either Swedish or English. Projects granted funding from 2014 onwards must submit the
The final report must be written using a standard typeface, have single line spacing and 2.5 cm top, bottom, left and right margins.

The following section headings must be included in the final report:

Title of the project and project number
Report author(s)
Background
Materials and methods
Results
Discussion
Publications
Conclusions (with regard to benefits and advice for the industry)
Dissemination of results to the agricultural/horticultural sector

Provide links to any existing publications or other popular science reports that have been written within the project. Provide links also to any websites where the project is described. If publications only exist in paper format, these must be submitted if the review panel requests them.

**2.10 Guidelines and tips for writing popular science reports**

**2.10.1 Intro**

Maximum 4000 characters in Swedish

You must write your popular science report in Swedish. You may use a maximum of 4000 characters, including blank spaces (the same number of characters used in the entire 2.10 section). Formatting possibilities are limited to row and section divisions.

The popular science report must be a stand-alone text, so take care therefore when copying from your final report. The report will be reviewed as a part of the final report.

**2.10.2 Importance for commercial stakeholders**

Your project has been funded by Sweden's farmers and horticultural businesses. They have forgone from making short-term profits and prioritised research for long-term improvements in competitiveness and sustainability. For this to be achieved your results must reach the end user and be put into practice.
2.10.3 Reaching non-academic target groups

The popular science report is not an academic text. It must be written from a distinctly target group perspective and be directed towards farmers, advisers and the media. This means that you must adapt your language use accordingly and also that you must focus on the tangible benefits of your results.

An easily read, concise and accurate description of the research results is an efficient tool in communicating with different stakeholders within the agrocultural sector. A popular science report must be able to function as a basis for an article, for example in a farming magazine. In this way you can reach tens of thousands of readers, including many that may be able to benefit from your research.

Bear in mind that you have one A4 page available to explain your project – the benefits, results and how these were obtained – to the layman. A good report does your work justice.

2.10.4 Writing tips

Researchers have high credibility. In the popular science report you do not need to convince the reader by presenting data and methods so that they will believe in your results. You can rationally focus on the benefits, conclusions and results. How you have obtained the results will be described in the final report.

Begin with an attention-grabbing title and begin the text with the most important points. Help your reader to understand what the most important take-home message about your research is and then order the content according to interest value.

Do not be afraid to simplify. When your results are disseminated they will be simplified by someone. It is better that you are the one to simplify the results rather than anyone else, as you know your subject best.

Be factual and quantify when you can. Explain the effects your results can lead to and how the results should be used in practice. For example, that the results can give X percent greater yields, Y SEK lower costs or that the research can be summarised as Z amount of advice that contribute to disease avoidance.

Divide the text into paragraphs separated by empty line spaces. Use subsection headings to help the reader. For example, write "Thirty-percent less cadmium" instead of "Results".

Write briefly and concisely, but avoid using abbreviations. It is easier for the reader to understand including than inc. or e.g. and etc., for example. Acronyms should also be avoided.

Use Swedish terms rather than Latin or English alternatives. Use technical terms with caution.

Write in the active form, for example "we analysed" instead of "the project analysed" or "an analysis was performed".

The reader will have questions that you can use to support your writing, for example:

How can the results provide commercial advantages?
Can the results reduce the environmental impact?

Can the results improve animal welfare?

Can the results lead to time-saving?

Can the results improve working environments?

Are the results of interest to the general public?

Do the results show that current views are inaccurate?

Write relatively simply.

To assess how easy or difficult the text is to read you can use a readability index. This can be done most simply using the calculations available at www.lix.se.

Ask for help.

Ask a discerning person with good language skills to read the report. It is always easier to see someone else's spelling mistakes, grammatical errors, misplaced participles and other aspects that can make the text difficult to understand and reduce the credibility of the report. Preferably ask the opinion of someone who is not an expert in the same area as you.
3.0 INSTRUCTIONS FOR EVALUATION

Sector group and review panel members must review and evaluate newly submitted project applications in their existing state.

3.1 Sector review groups (Step 1 Project overview)

A sector review group comprises reviewers from the agricultural and horticultural sector as well as representatives from process industries who have an understanding of research. They may hold a doctoral degree. The reviewers comprising sector review groups are nominated by SLF and by people from the respective sectors involved. The number of reviewers from each respective sector is proportional to the funding contributed by that sector. The sector review group evaluates the applications from the point of view of the three "Benefit to the farming sector" evaluation criteria.

The sector review group is responsible for evaluating submitted applications in Step 1 and from these must compile a rank order list with proposals to the Secretariat of which projects the group regards should be invited to submit a full-scale application.

3.2 Review panels (Step 2 Full-scale application)

A review panel is comprised of approximately 50% scientific reviewers and 50% relevance assessors recruited from the appropriate sector review group. The composition of the group reflects the topic areas of the applications. The review panel groups must collectively be able to evaluate the applications within the entire subject area of the panel, or in other words must have coverage of the subject area and the ability to evaluate the project with regard to the entire knowledge chain. If necessary external reviewers may be recruited to supplement the competence of the review panel. SLF strives to achieve a mix of national and international scientific reviewers, partly because of conflict of interest (for example due to the fact that a reviewer cannot apply for funding), and partly to broaden the scientific competence of the panel and include more international influence.

The review panel is responsible for evaluating and ranking the projects that have progressed from Step 1 to the second step on behalf of SLF. The review panel evaluates the applications from the point of view of "Benefit to the farming sector" and "Scientific quality".
The Swedish Farmers' Foundation for Agricultural Research Board makes the final decision about whether or not a project will be awarded funding.

3.3 Appointment of chairperson and reviewers

The SLF Board has the strategic responsibility for ensuring:

- the appointment of a chairperson and deputy chairperson within the sector groups. (The chairperson will subsequently also be the chairperson of the review panel).
- the appointment of candidates for the sector groups and review panels that the SLF Board has nominated.
- that the review procedure is efficient and the relevant sectors and academia are well represented.
- that the sectors are represented proportionately to the funding contributed.

All reviewers are appointed according to competence and the reviewers have the task of representing all of the sectors in question, regardless of any wishes of the company or organisation they belong to.

3.4 Evaluation

The concept overview is evaluated by a sector group comprised of farmers, researchers, advisers and other experts from the farming sector. Each group holds a meeting where they evaluate all of the applications and compile a proposal for selection of those that should progress to submission of a full-scale application. The full-scale application is then evaluated by a review panel, where international and national scientists and aspects of the farming industry are represented, and the panel proposes for the Board of SLF the projects that should be awarded funding. The Board then makes the final decision.

All of the reviewers in the review panel must read through each project and make an evaluation and points scoring based on the criteria that are presented in the Evaluation criteria section. The relevance and benefit to the agricultural/horticultural sectors is evaluated for every submitted concept overview. For the full-scale project application the review panels must evaluate both the relevance and the scientific quality. If the reviewer has a conflict of interest then the reviewer enters notification of this in the system. If a conflict of interest arises the person concerned must not evaluate the application.

3.5 Evaluation criteria

Benefit for the agricultural/horticultural sectors

-Potential

The potential of the project to contribute to profitability, competitiveness and sustainable development, for example through augmenting and reinvigorating a sector or creating preconditions for new business enterprises to emerge. The potential of the project group to achieve the above.
-Relevance & benefit

The capability of the proposed project to solve unmet needs and tangible problems for a defined owner of such needs. The likelihood, over the short or long-term, of significant improvement for the farming sector. Evaluation of the novelty value of the project for respective sectors.

-Communication & dissemination of results

Description of relevant stakeholders and end users. There must be a tangible and realistic plan stating how the results obtained will be communicated further to the next stage in order to be of benefit after the conclusion of the project. Suggestions about what should be taken further after the conclusion of the project.

Scientific quality

-Hypothesis & questions addressed

The originality and novelty value of the proposed project. The scientific importance of the project objectives and the possibilities of significant results.

-Methods & performance, including budget

The feasibility and suitability of the scientific methods. Tangible and realistic work schedule, coupled to a reasonable budget.

-Competence of the main applicant & project group

Ability to carry out the project according to the project plan, sufficient experience of project management, the strengths and competitiveness of the project group, both within the agricultural/horticultural sectors and academia.

3.6 Points and grade score

All evaluation is made using the SLF application system. Points scoring and opinions for each project are entered no later than the final date stated on the invitation. After the system is closed for review no further information can be added. A summary of the evaluations is sent out prior to the review panel meeting. The lists are ranked according to average points scored and overall grade awarded.

1. Points scoring scale

When reviewing, the sector groups and review panels use the following points scale:

6 points: excellent
5 points: very good
4 points: good
3 points: satisfactory
2 points: needs improvement
1 point: rejected

2. Grade scoring scale

When reviewing, the sector group and review panels also award an overall grade score to the application.

A= Excellent application
B= Strong application
C= Weak application

3.7 Evaluation process

1. All reviewers read and points-score the applications according to the criteria in section 3.4 Evaluation criteria. A reviewer may be either a rapporteur (principal reviewer) or a reviewer (co-reviewer). For all reviews the comments from the reviewers must be submitted together with the grade scores. In Step 1 there will also be applications that the reviewers will read but will not assign a points score to. In Step 2 all of the applications assigned to each respective review panel will be read by all of the members of that review panel. The criteria used as a basis for points scoring must be used to assist in wording the opinion statement issued by the panel. The rapporteur for each project will write an explanation of justification based on the conclusions of the review panel and will also write an opinion statement in the web review system.

2. In Step 2 the review panels must rank the applications and provide proposals for the amount of funding to be awarded, the duration of the project and any required revision of the project. Based on this a decision proposal is submitted to the Swedish Farmers’ Foundation for Agricultural Research Board.

3. The SLF Board will make its final decision based on the decision proposals of the review panels.

3.8 Rapporteur

Each application will be assigned a rapporteur. The rapporteur is responsible for collating the opinion of the panel and preparing a decision proposal. The rapporteur shall briefly present the project and the opinion of the panel at the review panel meeting.

In Step 2 the rapporteur shall return to the web form and write an opinion statement to the applicant. The comments raised at the review panel meeting must be considered in wording the justification.

The justification must be worded so that the applicant clearly understands the reason for why a project has been rejected. Positive feedback may also be given. Rejection of an application must be
based on the criteria and meaning of the points stated in the *Evaluation criteria* section and may not exceed 10 sentences.

3.9 Decision proposal

The sector group and review panel meetings must result in a decision proposal.

Information about the decisions proposed by the sector groups and review panels may only be issued by the SLF Secretariat.