Call for 'seed' funding
LTU-1805-2026

Background and Scope

To strengthen the scientific development and strategic impact of the Centre of Advanced Mining and Metallurgy – Critical Raw Materials (CAMM-CRM), Luleå University of Technology (LTU) launches a call for seed funding projects. The purpose of this call is to support high-quality, exploratory research activities that:

are clearly aligned with the mission, vision, and roadmap of CAMM-CRM support nationally, EU-, or NATO-defined priorities for critical raw material resilience lay the foundation for new or expanded research activities with strong potential for substantial external funding (e.g. national strategic calls, EU framework programmes, excellence centres, or industry co-funded initiatives).

Critical raw materials are fundamental to Europe's green and digital transitions, underpinning technologies for electrification, renewable energy, energy storage, advanced manufacturing, and defence. Meanwhile, Europe remains highly dependent on imports of many CRMs, creating strategic vulnerabilities. Addressing these challenges requires system-level innovation, including but not limited to geological understanding, exploration, processing, metallurgy, recycling, environmental performance, and societal acceptance.

CAMM-CRM recognises that future advances in critical raw material research will arise both from focused, discipline-driven studies and from new research directions that are not yet fully defined or embedded within existing programme structures. The purpose of this seed funding call is to provide an open and flexible entry point for novel research ideas, early-stage concepts, and exploratory activities that are relevant to the core focus of CAMM-CRM on critical raw materials. Seed projects funded through this call are demonstrate clear relevance to the exploration and extraction of novel critical raw materials, or associated scientific, technological, environmental, or societal challenges, and show potential to develop into larger research initiatives or externally funded projects. Seed projects funded through this call are expected to strengthen CAMM-CRM's role as a national hub for CRM research.

About the Call

This call invites seed project applications of high scientific quality from researchers at LTU. Applications may originate from any relevant discipline, provided they are focusing on research aiming at furthering capacity for the discovery and characterization of CRM-endowed minerals deposits, designing sustainable solutions for CRM extraction from primary and secondary sources and by-product valorization from primary and recycled materials, and understanding and minimizing environmental impacts related to CRM extraction. Projects focusing on manufacturing, logistics and substitution of CRMs for non-critical elements in industrial processes are outside the scope of this call.

Each granted seed project is expected to:

- have a duration of approximately 4-7 months,
- request a budget in the range of SEK 200,000 - 1,000,000
- focus on activities that enable future scaling through external funding.

Seed projects are intended to support idea and/or concept development, pilot studies, preliminary data generation, method development, or new collaborations, rather than full-scale research programmes. Submissions are due no later than March 16, 2026. Follow the instructions below and

send the application in a PDF file to instregsbn@ltu.se with reference number LTU-1805-2026. A decision will be announced in May, and projects can start on June 1, 2025, at the earliest.

Eligibility, Timeline, and Submission

- Main applicant: Must be an employee at LTU
- Application deadline: March 16, 2026
- Project start: From 1 June 2026
- Project duration: Max 7 months

Applications shall be submitted as a single PDF file by email to instregsbn@ltu.se with reference number LTU-1805-2026, with reference "CAMM-CRM Seed Funding Call 2026".

Decisions will be announced shortly after the evaluation process, and funded projects are expected to start as specified in the call.

Application Instructions

The application shall be written in English, be approximately 5–6 pages and follow the CAMM-CRM Seed Project Application Template.

The application must include the following sections:

- Project title
- Personal details: Name and title of the main applicant (LTU employee), division, department, e-mail, and telephone number
- Abstract: Maximum 150 words
- Background and motivation: Description of the research field, research questions, and the project's contribution to existing knowledge. The application must clearly explain the project's relevance to CAMM-CRM's focus on critical raw materials and value-chain integration, and how it contributes to sustainable and resilient CRM supply.
- Objectives:
    - Short-term objectives: scientific outputs, internal synergies within LTU, expected publications, and targeted external funding opportunities.
    - Long-term objectives: potential to develop into larger research initiatives, strategic projects, or long-term collaborations.
- Project description and implementation: Description of planned activities, methodologies, and expected outcomes.
- Dissemination of results: Planned outputs such as internal reports, workshops, conference contributions, or journal publications.
- Organisation: Description of the project manager and other participants, including brief statements of key competences. Reference groups may be included where relevant.
- Time plan; Project start and end dates, milestones, and key deliverables.
- Budget and co-funding: Budget breakdown according to *Full cost calculation* (Fullkostnadskalkyl) Excel template, showing any planned co-funding. Funds may be used for salary (incl. overheads) and direct project costs (e.g. analysis, materials, travels).
- References cited: Keep references concise and relevant.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by the CAMM-CRM Management Group and external reviewers based on the following criteria:

- Novelty and scientific importance of the proposed research idea.
- Added value relative to ongoing research at LTU and within CAMM-CRM.
- Strategic fit with CAMM-CRM's mission, roadmap, and research priorities.
- Long-term potential for substantial external funding, including national and international programmes.

Industry support from actors in the raw materials sector will be regarded as favorable.

Decision and Reporting

Funding decisions will be taken by the CAMM-CRM Board. Funded projects are expected to submit a final scientific report and a financial statement at the end of the project period.

Contact Information

For questions regarding the call or its scope, please contact:

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Coordinator: Betty Christakopoulou