SUN Natural Resources for Sustainability Transitions

Call for 'seed' funding
LTU-1159-2025
Background and Scope

To strengthen the development of the LTU research area "*Natural Resources for Sustainability Transitions*" (SUN), we launch a third call for "seed" projects. The overall goals of this call are to fund 'seed' projects that: (a) are in line with the aims and visions of the SUN research area; (b) are multi-disciplinary; and (c) lay the foundations for new or improved research activities with significant external funding.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) signify the blueprint to achieve a sustainable future, including seventeen global challenges such as climate change, improved health, equality, and economic development. Reaching the SDGs is a formidable task that stretches far beyond incremental changes in existing production processes. The transformation is often characterized by disruptive technological change. Novel actor networks, value chains, and institutions (i.e., legal rules, norms) must be put in place. Technological change is therefore highly intertwined with societal change.

In SUN, we take stock in the fact that the natural resources of northern Sweden, in the form of *minerals and metals, forest biomass, and hydropower* (green electricity), play key roles in a sustainable society. The SDGs presume green technological change and innovation, such as, for instance, electrification based on zero-carbon energy sources, energy storage and flexibility,resource and energy-efficient production processes, as well as an increased use of byproducts and waste materials. At the same time, though, it is important to address how such developments affect the pursual of different types of SDGs. Efforts involving attempts to reach one goal couldmake it more difficult to reach another one; this results in difficult trade-offs where the various dimensions of sustainable development – environmental, economic, and social – are not easily aligned (at least in the short term).

In this context, the vision for SUN is that LTU, through first-rate research on the emergence of sustainable industrial value chains and its societal implications is an indispensable partner for industries and other key actors in society. LTU should lead the way and make it possible for Sweden to develop novel technologies that will lead to a radical reduction in the environmentaland carbon footprints, increase competitiveness, as well as the legitimacy of the transformation towards a sustainable society.

About the Call

In this call, we seek 'seed' applications of high quality from both the technical and philosophical faculties, and that can address the above vision of a natural resource-dependent sustainability transition. The total budget for the call equals SEK 1 000 000.

Each granted "seed" project is expected to last around 6-10 months and have a maximum budget of SEK 250 000. Submissions are due no later than **May 2, 2025**. Follow the instructions below and send the application in a PDF file to **instregsbn@ltu.se** with reference number **LTU-1159-2025**. A decision will be announced in May, and projects can start on **June 1, 2025**, at the earliest.

Instructions

The application for 'seed' funding should be about five-six pages long, written in English, and be structured around the following sections/headings. **Please use the attached template** and submit your application as PDF (see above)**.**

- **Project title**
- **Personal details:** name and title of the main applicant (needs to be a 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 research. The application must clearly address why the project is interesting and relevant *in the context of the research area's focus* on the role of natural resources in the transition to a sustainable society. Moreover, in what ways does the project involve novel multi-disciplinary cooperation?
- **Objectives:** short-term goals (i.e. scientific goals, synergies between research groups within LTU, expected publications and external funding); and long-term goals (i.e. potential to develop the research scientifically and funding-wise over the coming years).
- **Project description and implementation:** what will be done in the project and what methodologies will be used?
- **Dissemination of research results:** type of reporting (e.g., internal report, conference paper, journal paper).
- **Organization:** description of the project manager and other participants in the project; as well as reference group (if applicable). Provide very short bios, and statements of key competences.
- **Time plan:** project start, project end, and important milestones.
- **Project budget and co-funding (if applicable):** Funding may be used to cover the costs of salary, material, and travel.
- **References cited (keep them few and relevant)**

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Evaluation criteria

The applications for 'seed' projects will be evaluated based on the following criteria: (a) novelty and importance of research idea; (b) added value in relation to ongoing research at LTU; (c) the project's fit with respect to the vision of the research area; (d) the multi-disciplinary content (new actor constellations are encouraged but not required); and (e) the long-term potential for substantial future funding (e.g., EU funding, excellence centers, larger Formas or VR grants).

Decision

The final funding decisions will be taken by the SUN steering group, and will be announced in May, 2025. The granted applications are expected to submit a final report and a financial statement at the end of the project period.

We look forward to your applications!

The steering group of the research area "Natural Resources for Sustainability Transitions" (SUN)

Contacts

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