



## Call for project proposals: Studies within thematic areas prioritised by the EBA

---

The Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA) is a government committee analysing and evaluating Sweden's international development aid. The EBA contributes knowledge to improve Swedish development cooperation and sheds light on current issues and themes which have not received enough attention.

**EBA has decided to allocate funds for studies within any of its four prioritised areas (democracy support; SRHR and health; aid in fragile situations; environment and climate). Funds are available for researchers active at institutions based in Sweden in order to conduct studies of direct relevance for the MFA, Sida and/or other Swedish development cooperation actors.**

### Background and motive

EBA works with a "double independence" in the sense that the Expert Group independently decides what to analyse and evaluate, while commissioned authors and experts independently answer for conclusions and possible recommendations in published studies. To the EBA, it is essential to collaborate with knowledgeable and competent authors, experts in their respective fields.

To increasingly use the resource base of researchers active at institutions in Sweden, the EBA allocates funds for studies specifically authored by researchers. EBA is not providing research grants in the way research foundations do, but finances specific studies of relevance for Swedish international aid. The current initiative aims at increasingly engage researchers in formulating proposals and conduct studies at the request of the Expert Group.

The choice of theme and research questions are left to the applicants. However, the proposal shall be included in any of the following themes:

- Aid in challenging situations: humanitarian assistance, migration, conflicts and fragile situations, issues relating to the interaction between various of these areas;
- SRHR and health;
- Focus on democracy: evidence, strategic choices and results;
- Environment and climate.

The proposed studies shall focus on Swedish development aid and be relevant for the MFA, Sida and/or other actors in Sweden's development cooperation. Applicants shall have documented expertise within the proposed field. Funding is allocated to separate studies, and not as additional funding to already financed research.

## Application process, budget and timetable

The application is made in two separate steps. In a first round a project idea is briefly presented, with full author CVs annexed. Final day for project ideas is Sunday 23 May 2021, at midnight.

A review committee invites, after selection, short-listed applicants to provide a full application, in line with the EBA template for proposals (will be sent to selected applicants). The invitations will be sent by Friday the 18 June 2021. Final date to provide full applications is Sunday the 8 August 2021. The review committee will assess the full applications, and delivers on the basis of this a recommendation to the Expert Group, which on its meeting 1 September 2021 decides what proposal/s to accept.

### Preliminary timetable

---

Final date for application requests (step 1)	23 May
Invitation to selected applicants to provide full application	18 June
Final day for application (step 2)	8 August
Decision on proposals	1 September
Contract signing EBA and authors	September - October
Conducting of study	To be negotiated
Planned launch	To be negotiated

---

#### *Step one: Request to file an application*

All interested researchers active at Swedish-based research institutes and institutions are eligible to request to be short-listed during step one. EBA will in the next step invite selected researchers to hand in a full application.

The request to file an application shall be sent by e-mail to [ud.eba@gov.se](mailto:ud.eba@gov.se). Write "Call for applications" in the subject line. The request shall include:

1. Project idea (maximum 900 words)
2. Complete CVs for researcher/s
3. A list of the lead researcher's most relevant research studies (maximum 5 studies, not older than 5 years)

Applicants are asked not to hand in documents or texts that have not explicitly been asked for under these three points.

The assessment will be based on the above information, applying EBAs five assessment criteria (Criterion 1 in appendix 1), experience and competence of the researchers (Criterion 3 in appendix 1) and the originality of the project idea.

#### *Step two: Full application / project proposal*

One or several researchers/research teams will be invited to provide full proposals for studies. A detailed description of the study's process, design and methods shall be presented. It is up to the applicant/s to choose study design and methods. The study shall be conducted with high scientific quality and the choice of method and design be clearly motivated.

The project proposal shall be written in Swedish or English and not exceed 12 pages. The proposal shall contain: background, project question and motives, description of intended users/target group, method, literature/data, scope and limitations, expected results, size and format of report, timetable, budget proposal (with cost/ hour for each team member). As attachment to the application author CVs.

The budget proposal shall allow for two to four meetings with the reference group for the study (to be assigned by the EBA after consultation with authors), and participation in an event launching the report of the study. These activities will take place in Stockholm, alternatively over video.

Applicants are also expected to, in step two, inform about all possible conflicts of interest regarding members of the team, as these may constitute basis for exclusion.

A designated team will assess incoming applications, based on EBA's five assessment criteria, the design and feasibility, authors qualifications and costs (see appendix 1).

Applications shall be valid until 30 November 2021.

Any questions about the process or content of the proposals can be asked via e-mail to [ud.eba@gov.se](mailto:ud.eba@gov.se). Application documents will, when the assessment process is finalised, be subject to Swedish transparency legislation. Separate sections in documents may be masked in the version made public if good reason are presented (clear motives why economic damage may be caused if made public). The applicant/s are fully responsible for requesting secrecy on these occasions.

### *Scope of studies*

The law of public procurement guide the extent to which studies may be initiated through direct procurement, as in this case. To stay below the threshold amount for direct procurement the costs of each study may not exceed SEK 615 000 (excluding VAT). The timing of the study may be freely decided, however to be relevant to Swedish development aid, it might be important to link the study to events or ongoing processes, which may impact on the timing.

### *EBA's assessment criteria*

In its assessment of studies to conduct, the EBA considers the following five general criteria:

- Degree of new knowledge
- Policy relevance
- Timeliness
- Large effect /share of aid budget
- Principal importance

To be selected a study should fulfil at least one of these criteria. The fulfilment of more than one criteria generally makes the study even more relevant, however this does not happen automatically, but is assessed from case to case.

### Target group and EBA mode of operation

Central target groups for EBA studies are political leadership and civil servants at the MFA, leadership and program manager at Sida, FBA and of those civil society organisations that are agents within Swedish development cooperation, members of the foreign affairs committee of the Swedish Riksdag, and a wider aid interested public.

Every EBA study is accompanied by a reference group, led by one of the members in the Expert Group. The reference group will advise the authors on issues relating to quality and relevance and will meet two to four times during the study period. The reference group will consist of a combinations of researchers and practitioners. In addition to participating in these meetings, authors of EBA reports also make themselves available for some kind of event when the report is launched and results of the work presented to the public.

### About the Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA)

The Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA) is a governmental committee with a mandate to analyse and evaluate Swedish international development aid. The EBA contributes knowledge to improve Swedish development cooperation and sheds light on current issues and themes which have not received enough attention. EBA also arranges seminars in areas of relevance for Swedish development cooperation.

Members of the Expert Group are: Helena Lindholm (chair), Johan Schaar (vice chair), Sara Johansson de Silva, Kim Forss, Torgny Holmgren, Magnus Lindell, Joakim Molander, Julia Schalk, Staffan I Lindberg and Janet Vähämäki.

## Annex 1 – criteria for the assessment of proposals

Criteria	1. Relevance for Swedish development aid, according to EBA criteria* (weight 40 percent)	2. Quality of proposal in terms of design, method, plan for implementation (weight: 40 percent)*	3. Relevant experience and competence of team members (weight: 20 percent)
<b>Scale</b>	Criteria 1,2 and 3 are graded 0 to 5 with: 5= Excellent; 4 = Very good; 3 = Good; 2 = Good enough; 1 = Insufficient; 0 = Not possible to assess. Sub-criteria are numbered in order of falling priority, but are not given numerical grades. Each criterion is then weighted for a final grade in the interval [0, 5] (0,40xcriterion 1 + 0,40xcriterion 2 + 0,20xcriterion 3)		
<b>Subcriteria</b> (Numbered in order of falling priority)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Degree of knowledge contribution relevant for aid actors</li> <li>-Policy relevance for Swedish development cooperation</li> <li>-Timeliness for Swedish development cooperation</li> <li>-Large effect / large share of Swedish aid budget</li> <li>-Principal importance for Swedish development cooperation</li> </ul> <p>* The criteria are assessed independently, but weighted together for a total assessment. High scores on one individual criterion may result in high total scores.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Will the study design, its operationalisation, proposed methods and plan for implementation make it possible to achieve the purpose of the study?</li> <li>2. Have study design and method been described in a specific and transparent way?</li> <li>3. Have important and relevant methodological limitations been described and discussed?</li> <li>4. Have the authors made clear how the research questions relate to relevant research?</li> <li>5. Will study design and implementation allow for reliable conclusion that may serve as reflection, learning and use by the intended users?</li> <li>6. Does the proposal contain a clear and realistic work- and time plan?</li> <li>7. Is the proposed budget realistic in relation to the study?</li> </ol> <p>* An overarching assessment will be done of the feasibility of the study, given respect for ethical considerations. However, this will not constitute a sub-criterion.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Experience and competence of team members in:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) chosen field of study</li> <li>b) international development cooperation</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Academic degree of team members</li> <li>3. Quality of studies provides as samples of team members' previous work</li> </ol>