

## Call for applications

# Cross-disciplinary Thematic Groups within SLU's Interdisciplinary Academy 2024-2025

**Call opens:** Wednesday 6 March 2024.

**Call closes:** Wednesday 22 May 2024.

**Decision:** Decisions on the approved thematic groups will be announced on Wednesday 19 June 2024.

**Who can apply:** The call is aimed at all researchers at SLU holding a doctoral degree, regardless of faculty affiliation or subject focus.

**Call focus:** Cross-disciplinary themes within the broad field of *green transformation*.

**Size of the grant:** 1 group of a maximum of 6 researchers will be funded the equivalent of 20 percent of full-time during the project period.

**Project period:** November 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 including a final event at the beginning of the autumn semester 2025.

## Contents

About the call .....	1
What is a Theme? .....	2
Requirements .....	2
What is the grant used for? .....	2
Assessment and decision .....	2
The work and the location .....	3
Reporting and project finalisation .....	4
Support and inspiration in the application process .....	4
How to apply .....	4
Background .....	5
Links .....	5

## About the call

The Interdisciplinary Academy (IDA) at SLU provides an opportunity for the university's researchers to collaborate across disciplinary boundaries on complex issues in the broad field of green transition.

The call welcomes groups of researchers (a maximum of 6 researchers/group) who are employed at SLU, regardless of faculty affiliation or subject specialisation, to submit proposals for *themes* that consist of questions about a scientific problem area of a complex nature and that need a cross-disciplinary approach to be managed and develop solutions. For example, a *theme* may concern sustainable land and water use; animal husbandry and its relationship with humans; land for forestry, food production, carbon sequestration, or biodiversity; global food security or digitalization for the green transition on an increasingly urbanized planet. The theme can be focused on scientific challenges in Sweden or other parts of the world.

The group that is awarded the grant develops the theme's questions together for eight months (1 November 2024-30 June 2025). IDA's program manager Marie Stenseke<sup>1</sup> will offer support and inspiration to the groups during the project period.

The project period ends with a forward-looking activity with an emphasis on future questions and continued research in the field.

## What is a Theme?

A theme in this call is shaped around a scientific problem that requires collaboration between several disciplines. The work within the theme can be about developing perspectives, definitions, concepts, models, working methods, etc. The theme's questions may preferably be exploratory and searching, and be at a stage that makes it not mature enough for ordinary research funding. The work of the thematic group can result in applications for larger projects or seed funds, or for different types of research communication, but do not need to do so. However, there should be clear goals for the work within the theme, and an idea of how these goals contribute to the development of knowledge and practice in the problem area.

## Requirements

- All researchers who are part of a theme must be employed at SLU
- All researchers included in the theme must hold a doctoral degree
- All applicants must have a main position at a department at SLU that they can be free from the equivalent of 20% of full-time during the entire project period
- The groups should consist of researchers from different disciplines and at least two different science branches (natural sciences, social sciences, engineering sciences, humanities, etc.)
- As one of the purposes of IDA is to create new collaborations within SLU, only one researcher per department is allowed in a thematic group. However, two researchers belonging to the same department may be allowed in the same group if the reason is well justified in the application.
- Anyone who has participated in an IDA thematic group may not be included in an application to IDA the following IDA period.

## What is the grant used for?

Researchers who are granted funding receive compensation equivalent to 20 percent of full-time (one working day/week) from the project. Salaries associated with researchers in IDA will be accounted directly on the NJ faculty's coding string (cost center 8940040 project 58940285). Fully government-funded professors are welcome to be part of the project group but do not receive any compensation. Travel and subsistence are paid for by the program for those researchers who must travel from another SLU location to participate in the working group's physical meetings (max 4500 SEK/person and occasion, against a receipt). An additional grant of a maximum of SEK 50,000/group can be applied for to support an activity that is considered valuable for the development of the group's work, or dissemination of the results, e.g. organising a seminar for other researchers and/or external actors, recording a film, making a study visit, printing some information material, etc. This additional grant must be justified based on the project's objectives and a budget where the costs are specified must be submitted together with the rest of the application.

## Assessment and decision

An assessment group consisting of representatives from different parts of SLU, and who have documented experience of cross-disciplinary research, will assess the applications and suggest which themes that will be granted resources. The assessment group can also suggest changes to the problem description and to the composition of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Read more about Marie Stenseke in this article on SLU's website: <https://www.slu.se/en/ew-news/2022/6/marie-stenseke-to-lead-ida/>

groups. IDA's steering group, which consists of the dean and the vice dean responsible for multi- and interdisciplinary science at the NJ faculty, as well as the programme manager for SLU Future Food, will make the final decision on which applications to approve, following the suggestions from the assessment group. In the assessment, great emphasis is placed on the design of the theme's approach, that the composition of the competence in the group is appropriate and balanced, and whether it can be considered likely that the group will achieve the goals set. In the assessment, new collaborations are rewarded higher than established ones.

### The work and the location

The group(s) set up their own work and will receive support from IDA's programme manager Marie Stenseke. Commitment and active participation of the participants is a prerequisite for success. Researchers who are granted funding undertake to devote the equivalent of 20 per cent of their working time to developing the theme together with their co-applicants during the eight consecutive months that make up the project period. All members are expected to be present and active in the work of the group. The work will take place through ten (10) mandatory physical meetings and 20 digital and hybrid meetings during the project period. With some exception, the meetings are located on Wednesdays. In order to promote the cross-disciplinary work at the physical meetings, the Ullbo building on Campus Ultuna will provide the environment where creativity, discussions, group work, individual work, seminars and more can alternate and coexist.

### Preliminary plan

Check already at the time of applying whether you can participate the proposed dates, especially during the physical meetings. A few times and dates may possibly be changed before the start of the work in consultation between the group and IDA's program manager. Please note that the group will also devote one day at the beginning of the fall semester 2025 to organizing a closing event in the form of an out-reaching activity for other SLU colleagues in collaboration with SLU Future Food.

Physical meetings at Ullbo, Ultuna		Zoom meetings	
2024	Time	2024	Time
13-14 November	(2 full days) 9-16	20 Nov	13-16
4 December	9-16	27 Nov	13-16
		11 Dec	
		18 Dec	
2025		2025	
15 January	9-16	22 Jan	13-16
5 February	9-16	29 Jan	13-16
12-13 March	(2 heldagar) 9-16	12 Feb	13-16
9 April	9-16	19 Feb	13-16
7 May	9-16	26 Feb	13-16
4 June	9-16	5 Mar	13-16
		19 Mar	13-16
		26 Mar	13-16
		2 Apr	13-16
		16 Apr	13-16
		23 Apr	13-16
		14 May	13-16
		21 May	13-16
		28 May	13-16
		11 Jun	13-16
		18 Jun	13-16
		Prel. 27 August 2025	Final event 9-16

## Reporting and project finalisation

After the end of the project period, the work/theme should be reported to the steering group with a brief summary of the group's results in relation to the objectives and a discussion of the cross-disciplinary process that has been developed. The project group shall also organize, in collaboration with SLU Future Food, an outreach activity for other SLU colleagues at the beginning of the autumn semester 2025.

## Support and inspiration in the application process

As support and inspiration for the application work, webinars with time for questions and matchmaking will be held via zoom on [March 6 and April 17 2024](#). There is also previous material to take part of.

- [IDA has a Teams page<sup>2</sup>](#) that is open to everyone at SLU, where there is a questions and answers section and where you can invite colleagues to discuss *themes*.
- [Recorded webinars on interdisciplinarity can be found here](#).
- [Here you can read about ongoing IDA groups \(IDA 2, 2023-2024\)](#).
- [Read more about IDA 1 \(2022-2023\)](#).

## How to apply

The application is sent no later than 22 May 2024 to [futurefood@slu.se](mailto:futurefood@slu.se) marked with "Application IDA". The application shall be written in Swedish or English and consist of 3-4 documents with the following content:

### Document 1

Description of the research problem and a strategy for how the work should be carried out in a maximum of 5 pages (excl. cover page and references) containing:

- a description of a cross-disciplinary research problem;
- a description of the group's scientific objectives during the project period in relation to the chosen problem area;
- a presentation of how the participating researchers' knowledge contributions are motivated by the theme;
- a plan for how the group intends to structure the work during the project period.

A cover page indicates the title of the theme and the names of participating researchers including the department affiliation.

### Document 2

Relevant CV for participating researchers of a maximum of one A4 page per participant.

### Document 3

A certificate from each researcher's head of department to certify that the researcher is employed at the department during the entire project period (25 Oct 2023-30 June 2024) but is granted leave from the department during the same period to work the equivalent to 20% of full-time for IDA provided that the application is granted. *Use the pdf form intended for the purpose.*

### Document 4 – (only if funds for activities are applied for)

A budget for extra costs shall be submitted only if funds for extra costs are applied for. See more information under the heading "What is the grant used for?" above. The budget, which may not contain any salary costs, is submitted on a separate sheet as a clear and simple list of partial costs in a table, containing also the summary of the costs.

---

<sup>2</sup> The web address to IDA's Teams page:

[https://teams.microsoft.com/l/team/19%3A0DAKRraU9IURTT\\_ElqeuErfCoMKkRYofsF0R5D4MCTAI1%40thread.tacv2/conversations?groupId=0abbd4b3-976d-49db-b6bf-b89918ed2267&tenantId=a3b5f071-0e49-47a0-a40e-9b7c9c4d647e](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/team/19%3A0DAKRraU9IURTT_ElqeuErfCoMKkRYofsF0R5D4MCTAI1%40thread.tacv2/conversations?groupId=0abbd4b3-976d-49db-b6bf-b89918ed2267&tenantId=a3b5f071-0e49-47a0-a40e-9b7c9c4d647e)

## Background

The Interdisciplinary Academy (IDA) at SLU was established 2022 and is run as a project by the NJ Faculty and SLU Future Food with the aim of building a long-term organisation for the development of cross-disciplinary research at SLU. Inspiration has been drawn from the Pufendorf Institute<sup>3</sup> at Lund University and experience has also been drawn from the Futures Lab<sup>4</sup> at SLU. The hope is that the programme will lead to increasing knowledge of, and interest in, cross-disciplinary research work, strengthen the ability to process research questions from a cross-disciplinary perspective, and facilitate cross-disciplinary research collaborations between different departments at SLU. The future development of IDA is managed in dialogue with SLU's other future platforms. To date, four IDA groups have been granted.

**The NJ Faculty's** strategy for 2021–2025 states that cross-disciplinary approaches should be part of the work to contribute to the transition to a sustainable society. The strategy states that the faculty will "strengthen the ability to process research questions from a cross-disciplinary perspective" and "facilitate cross-disciplinary research collaborations between different departments".

**SLU Future Food** is a platform that stimulates and develops cross-disciplinary research and collaborations for economically, ecologically and socially sustainable food systems.

## Links

[Aggregated information about IDA.](#)

[SLU's future platforms and interdisciplinarity.](#)

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pi.lu.se/en/pufendorf-ias>

<sup>4</sup> Futures Lab is a project run jointly by SLU Future Food and SLU Urban Futures. In 2020, an interdisciplinary research group participated in a project where the participants immersed themselves in futures studies and developed their own projects with futures perspectives. <https://www.slu.se/en/Collaborative-Centres-and-Projects/slu-urban-future/labs/futures-lab/>