

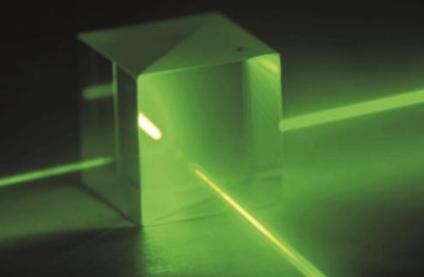
*Knut och Alice
Wallenbergs
Stiftelse*

Proof-of-concept Grant in AI, Quantum Technologies or ICT

Open from 2026 January 19 to March 25

Webinar | 2026-01-23

Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation



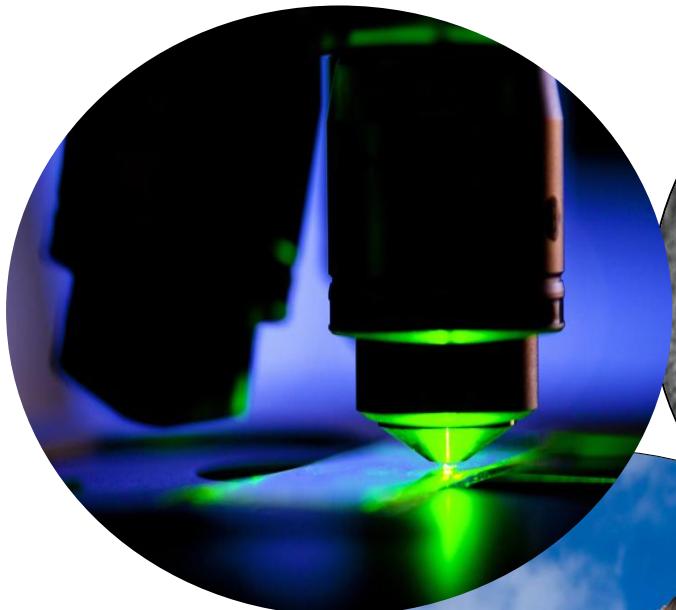
2.5 billion SEK 2025 and over 40 billion SEK in grants since 1917 to world-class basic research and education beneficial to Sweden



- One of the largest private funders of scientific research in Europe
- Mainly within medicine, technology and the natural sciences
- Long-term grants to excellent individual researchers and research projects
- Strategic projects and scholarship programs - important for research, business and society



BASIC SCIENCE



LONG-TERM



INNOVATION



FREEDOM



COMPETENCE



Grants

INDIVIDUALS



WALLENBERG ACADEMY FELLOWS
WALLENBERG SCHOLARS
WALLENBERG CLINICAL SCHOLARS
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

PROJECTS



STRATEGIC GRANTS



WASP, WASP-HS, WACQT, WCMM, WWSC, WISE, DDLS AND WIFORCE

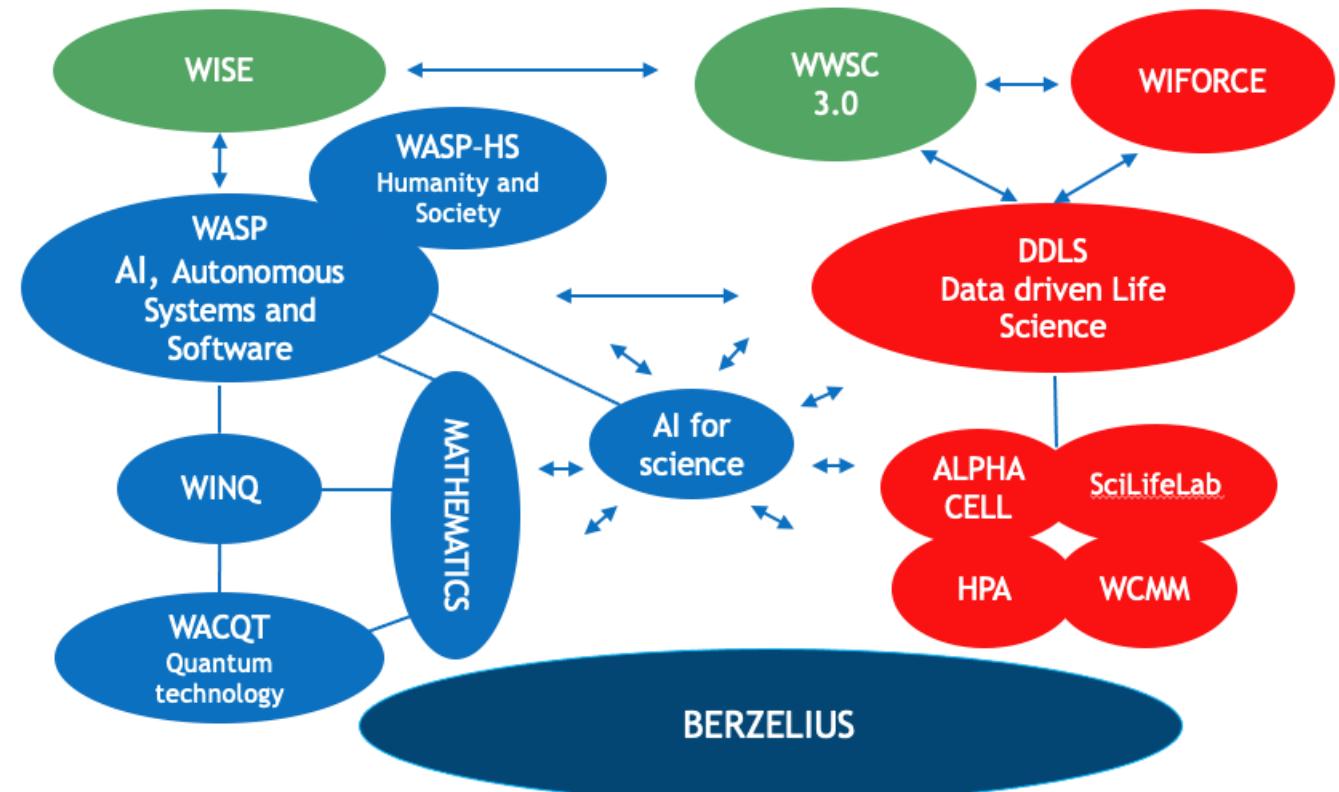
PROOF OF CONCEPT



139 GRANTS

Competence for Sweden - Strategic Grants

- The objective is to support excellent basic research but also to build competence in critical areas for Sweden and Swedish industry.
- The strategic programs have graduate schools with 1300 PhD students including 325 industrial PhDs.
- Financing over 600 postdocs and at least 120 industrial postdocs.
- Several research arenas.



14 billion SEK over 12 years

Proof of concept

The grant gives researchers opportunity to develop their discoveries towards validated methods, products or processes in the early stages and prepare for innovation and commercialization

- Eligible to apply are those who have or have had grants from the Wallenberg Foundations and employed at a Swedish university
- The grant is paid directly to the researcher's university, and the use of the grant must comply with the university's regulations and the Swedish professor's privilege
- A PoC project is between 1 and 4 MSEK over a period of no more than 2 years
- Three annual calls: in Life Science, Materials Science and, AI, Quantum Technologies or ICT

Two calls are open:

Life Science: January 13 - February 20, 2026

AIQI: January 19 - March 25, 2026

<https://kaw.wallenberg.org/en/awarded-proof-concept-grants-2025-calls>

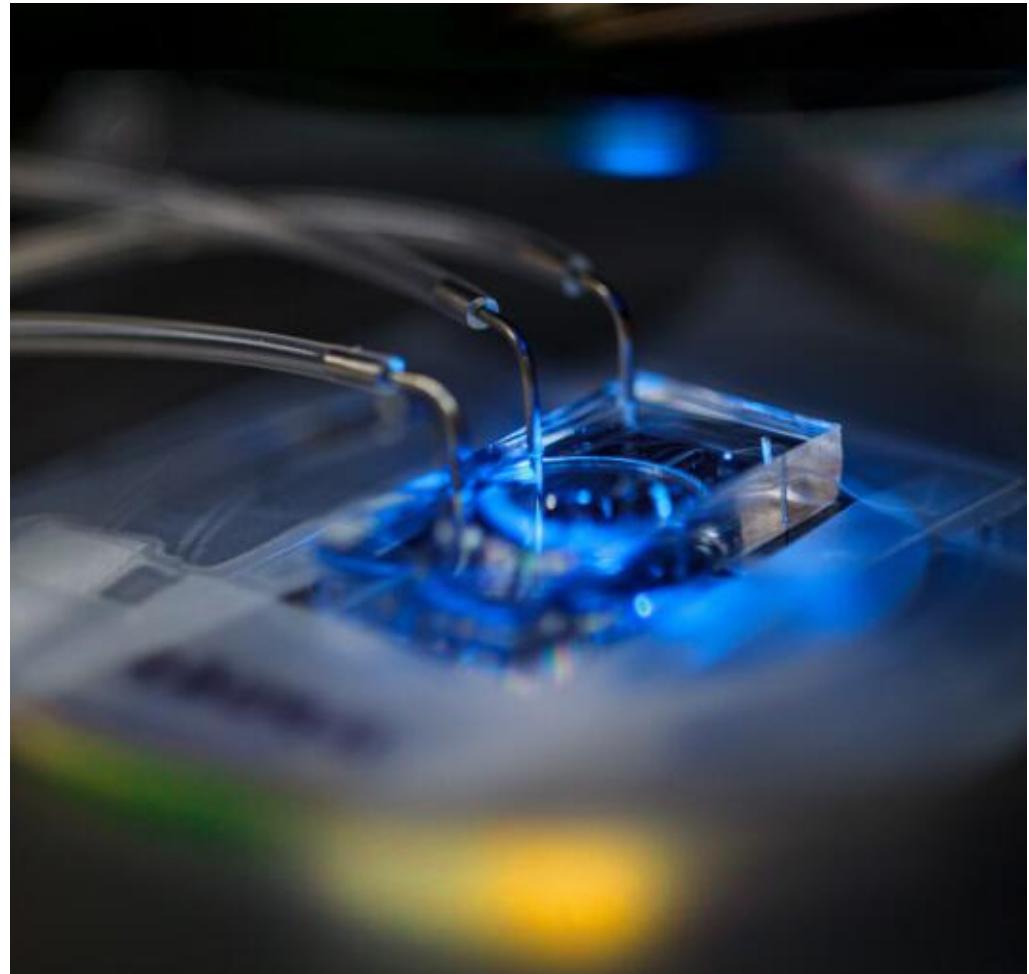


139 Grants SEK 466 million

A complete innovation system for KAW researchers

From basic research to commercialization

- KAW funds long-term, free basic research
- Proof of concept grants tied to the Wallenberg Launch Pad (WALP) which provides support and coaching for the proof-of-concept candidates and projects
- If a company is formed by the PoC-granted research team, the company can apply for funding from Navigare Ventures
- Navigare Ventures, is a wholly owned unlisted holding company in early-stage companies in science and technology
- Profit from Navigare Ventures goes back to Swedish research through the Wallenberg Ecosystem



Overview of the Process



Application, review and selection

- Raise awareness among the KAW scientist
- Scientific expert panel evaluation
- Identification of top candidates

WALP Phase 1 main activities

- 2+1 individual coaching sessions for identified candidates, preparing them for the WALP pitch and (potential) grant recommendation

WALP Phase 2 main activities

- Continue to build the team and complement it with e.g. experts, lab professionals, etc.
- Develop a Minimum Viable Product for research validation
- Establish deeper relationship with potential users
- Continued follow-up and support from WALP team
- Midterm and final presentation

Duration, Budget and costs

- The PoC grant can be **between 1 and 4 million SEK**
- The PoC grant is usually covering costs for **up to 24 months**, with a midterm presentation at halftime and a final presentation at the end of the project
- The grant cannot be used for covering the costs of patent applications or patents, or for business development.
- The PoC grant can only be **used for costs at a university** and should follow the university's processes and regulations and KAW regulations
- Costs that are allowed on a KAW PoC grant:
 - Salary of project members hired by the university
 - Infrastructure
 - Software licenses
 - Travel cost to attend conferences and fairs
 - Rent of special equipment or lab space
 - Up to 20 % university indirect costs

Grant application and evaluation criteria

Application

- **Project description and plan** (need, benefit, competition, approach, max 10 pages; follow instructions)
- **One-page project pitch** (important!)
- **Complete budget** (university)
- **CV**
- **Certificate** from the head of department
- **Verification(s) of interest** from external party(ies)

Evaluation criteria

- Does the proposed innovation solve a **persistent and important problem**?
- Is the potential **solution well defined**?
- Is the potential **solution novel and unique**?
- Is the potential **solution a sustainable solution**?
- Is there **interest from external partners**?
- Is the intellectual property (IP) protected and/or is there a plan for **protection**?
- Is the Proof-of-Concept project and its milestones **well defined and relevant**?
- Is the proposed **team adequate**?
- Is the **time plan and budget** realistic?

WALP Pitch Skeleton

- Introduction of presenters/idea owners and the relation to KAW
- Description of the need, the pain point you solve with your solution (N)
- High level description of the solution, highlighting the innovation and novelty, incl research background of the idea (A)
- The benefits of your solution and external parties verifying the need and their interest in your solution (B)
- Potential competitors or next best solutions which could replace yours (C)
- How you plan to defend your intellectual property (IP)
- Potential and addressable market worldwide and in Europe
- Description of the PoC you plan to do during the WALP project. WP description including purpose, scientific rationale, milestones and how it leads to innovation/commercial value
- Team: idea owners + the needed team
- WALP Project time plan & budget

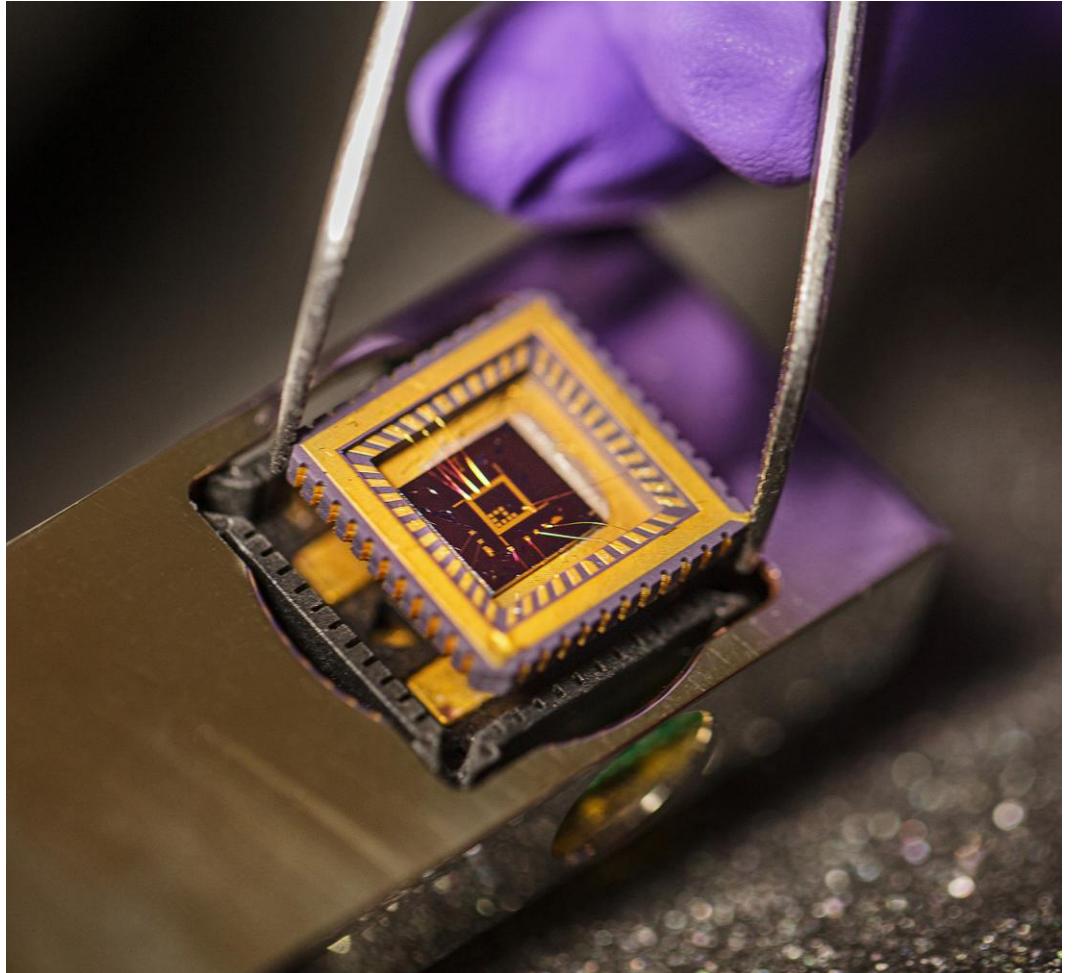
Proof of Concept Call in AI, Quantum Technologies or ICT

2026 Timeline

- The call opened on **January 19, 2026**
- Call closed on **March 25, 2026**
- Review panel results by beginning of May 2026
- WALP coaching sessions in May and June 2026
- WALP pitches during the last week of June
- Decision in July

<https://wasp-sweden.org/calls/kaw-proof-of-concept-grants-in-ai-quantum-technologies-or-ict/>

<https://kaw.wallenberg.org/en/calls/proof-concept-grants-ai-quantum-technologies-or-ict>



Suggested next steps...

- Define the Proof-of-Concept study: its **goal** and the well-defined and value-creating **work packages** and **milestones** needed to take you there
- Identify and engage with **external parties** (potential partners, customers, users, investors) - you need an interest verification for the project
- If relevant: contact your **innovation office** for business advice, support with market analysis, IP and/or regulatory strategy etc
- Apply on the KAW application portal

Thank You!