

Guidelines for grants for translation of Swedish literature and drama

*Adopted by the Director General of the Swedish Arts Council on March 6 2025.
Guidelines are in effect from the same date and until further notice. The guidelines replace the directive Adm 2008/158. Susanne Bergström Larsson, Head of Swedish Literature Exchange, is the document manager.*

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1. Introduction

Guidelines grants for translation of Swedish literature and drama is an internal policy that specifies how we interpret regulatory frameworks to distribute and monitor government grants for translation of Swedish literature and drama. The purpose is to facilitate processing and achieve legal certainty in our assessments and decisions. This document shall also be available on the Swedish Arts Council's website to provide a clear picture of how we distribute and follow up government grants.

2. Regulatory framework: Purpose and definitions

The grant for translation of Swedish literature and drama shall promote international dissemination of high-quality Swedish literature and Swedish drama.

In this context, Swedish literature means literature written in Swedish or in one of the national minority languages and published in Sweden. Swedish drama means drama written in Swedish or one of the national minority languages and performed in Sweden.

The core regulatory framework for this grant can be found in the Regulation (SFS 2007:1435) on government grants for international exchange and cooperation in the field of literature.

These guidelines are also based on the Ordinance (SFS 2012:515) with instructions for the Swedish Arts Council, the Government Authority Ordinance (SFS 2007:515), the Administrative Procedure Act (SFS 2017:900), and the General binding rules (2013:2) for the Swedish Arts Council's grant-making, the Swedish Arts Council's rules of procedure, the Swedish Arts Council's appropriation directions, and the national cultural policy objectives adopted by the Riksdag in December 2009.

Sweden's cultural policy objectives state that culture shall be a dynamic, challenging and independent force based on freedom of expression. Everyone shall have the opportunity to participate in cultural life. Creativity, diversity, and artistic quality shall characterise societal development.

The Swedish Arts Council's general terms and conditions state that grant recipients shall conduct their activities in accordance with Swedish law. Applicants shall conduct their activities with respect for human rights and the equal value of all human beings, regardless of sexual orientation, gender, skin colour, nationality, or ethnicity, linguistic or religious affiliation, disability, or age.

2.1. Who can apply?

Based on Regulation (SFS 2007:1435) on government grants for international exchange and cooperation in the field of literature, the Swedish Arts Council awards grants for translations of Swedish literature and drama into other languages.

Grants may be awarded to publishers or theatres in Sweden or in other countries. The applicant must be the one who will publish/perform the translation of the work. Applicants

shall have a professional distribution of the translated work. Professional distribution means that the work shall be able to reach readers in the relevant language area through bookstores and libraries. Production of dramatic works means that the theatre performs the work for audiences in the relevant language area.

The activities for which the grant is applied shall be carried out by a legal person*.

*) Legal person is a **legal term for an association** that has its own legal capacity, i.e., can acquire rights and assume obligations. A legal person can enter into agreements, own assets, and incur liabilities. The legal person can also act as a party in court proceedings.)

2.1.1. Who is not eligible to apply?

Natural persons cannot apply for the grant.

2.2. What is eligible for a grant?

You can apply for grants in accordance with the following specifications:

2.2.1. Which genres are eligible for grants?

Licensed translations of Swedish works in the genres prose, poetry, essays, non-fiction, picture books, comics and graphic novels, as well as drama published in book form, for children, young people, and adults are eligible for grants. Licensed means that there is a contract with the rightsholder regarding translation for publication/production.

Support can also be provided for translation of Swedish drama licensed for stage performance.

2.2.2. Which genres are not eligible for grants?

You cannot apply for grants for textbooks, Festschrifts, homage volumes, publishing of sheet music, study materials, specialised scholarly works, reference books, hobby books, yearbooks, books of local interest, exhibition catalogues, craft books, handbooks, cookbooks, and travel guides.

2.2.3. What are the rules on source languages?

One prerequisite for applying for grants is that the translation is done directly from Swedish or one of the national minority languages and not via any other language.

Exceptions may be granted for languages where there are no professional translators directly from Swedish or the national minority languages. This requires written approval from the rightsholder that clearly states which edition shall be used for the translation.

You cannot apply for works written in Swedish that have been published in original in Finland. Grants for these are handled by FILI (Finnish Literature Exchange).

2.2.4. What costs and amounts are eligible for application?

Translation costs and/or production costs are eligible for grants. Grants for production costs may be awarded for four-colour illustrated books or for books that are considered to

be particularly costly to publish in translation for other reasons, such as the production costs of poetry, comics and graphic novels. The grant cannot cover copyright costs.

You can apply for printing costs and, where applicable, for the costs of inserting text into comics and graphic novels.

For translation costs, the maximum amount you can apply for is the one corresponding to the translator's fee.

For production costs, the maximum amount you can apply for is an amount that covers the estimated costs of printing the book, and/or the costs of inserting text into comics and graphic novels.

The grant is awarded as de minimis aid under Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid. The tasks of a Member State pursuant to Article 6 (1), (3), and (4) of the Commission Regulation shall be performed by the Swedish Arts Council. Ordinance (SFS 2016:618).

2.2.5. What costs are not eligible for grants?

Production grants cannot be applied for for non-illustrated works or works with black and white illustrations, with the exception of hand-lettering black and white comics and graphic novels.

Support cannot be applied for the purchase of rights or production files, design or editorial and other comparable work.

2.3. How do you apply?

The application is made using a special form in the Swedish Arts Council's online portal. It is possible to apply for the grant throughout the year, but there are three application rounds per year, when the applications received by each respective application deadline are gathered for assessment and decision.

The application must be made well in advance of the planned publication/production as the information about an awarded grant must be printed in the book or theatre programme. A decision will be made approximately 8 weeks after the deadline. It is not possible to apply when the translation has already been published/performed on stage.

2.3.1. Which appendices shall be attached to the application?

In the application, the applicant shall provide the information and the appendices requested by the Swedish Arts Council. Compulsory attachments are signed license agreements, signed translation agreements, the translator's CV and list of works, and PDF/electronic version of the original Swedish edition of the work subject to the application. The application shall also include a justification for why the applicant is applying for support for the translation in question, as well as a description of how they plan to ensure that the translated work reaches the intended target audiences.

2.3.2. What happens if the application is incomplete or submitted too late?

If an application is received after the application deadline, it cannot be assessed in that application round. If an application is incomplete and the applicant does not complete it within the time communicated by the Swedish Arts Council, the Swedish Arts Council cannot process it in the current application round. In these cases, the application is processed in the next application round. If the translation's planned publication/performance date predates the decision date, the application cannot be processed.

2.4. How does the Swedish Arts Council assess the application?

The applications are assessed by the grant committee for Swedish literature and drama in translation and by senior advisors at the Swedish Arts Council's office. The grant committee consists of external experts in the field of literature. The members have the mandate for two years with the possibility of a two-year extension.

Once the application deadline has passed, the members of the grant committee will read and assess all works relevant to the application round. The grant committee and the Swedish Arts Council's office then examine each individual application in relation to the other applications and suggest how the grant will be distributed. Based on this, the senior advisors make a draft suggestion. The Director of international cooperation division decides on the final distribution of the grant.

If a member of the grant committee is disqualified with respect to any applicant, meaning biased due to kinship, friendship, or otherwise, the member may not be involved in the processing of that application. If a member of the grant committee did not participate in the processing of an application due to disqualification, this will be noted in the decision.

2.4.1. Basis for assessment

When the grant committee assesses applications, their primary starting point is the literary quality of the work in question. Members assess the narrative structure of the work, its linguistic and artistic expression, as well as the text's ability to, regardless of genre, engage the reader.

With respect to illustrated works, the interaction between text and illustrations is also assessed. For non-fiction, the factual presentation is also assessed.

In addition to literary quality, the Swedish Arts Council also considers the quality of the application, according to the following aspects:

- the applicant's arguments for why the book shall be translated into the language in question,
- how the applicant plans to ensure that the translation reaches its audience.
- the translator's qualifications

2.4.2. Basis for prioritisation:

When the amount applied for exceeds the available funds, the grant committee applies the priorities established by the Swedish Arts Council:

The age of the work: The Swedish Arts Council prioritises the translation of contemporary literature but does not exclude the possibility of awarding grants for the translation of older works.

Language: The Swedish Arts Council prioritises the introduction of an author in a new language and in areas where the author has not yet been established.

Number of applications per applicant: The Swedish Arts Council may limit the number of approved applications per applicant and round.

Anthologies: Anthologies already published in Sweden are prioritised over those that the applicant themselves has put together for exclusive publication in the relevant language.

Diversity: As a whole, the grant shall support the dissemination of a diverse range of Swedish literature and drama with respect to genres, countries, languages, and authors.

Other priorities: In the announcement of the grant, the Swedish Arts Council may formulate other priorities. If so, this may be given special consideration in the prioritisation.

2.5. When does the Swedish Arts Council make a decision and how is the applicant notified?

The Swedish Arts Council decides on how to distribute the grant approximately 8 weeks after the application deadline. Decisions are announced by e-mail to the e-mail address specified in the application.

2.6. How much can you receive?

The Swedish Arts Council does not have a fixed amount or percentage for the size of the grant. This is instead based on the amount applied for and available funds. Usually, around 50% of the translation fee is awarded. The production grant is assessed in relation to the stated costs but the maximum amount is SEK 20,000.

2.7. What happens if a grant is awarded?

The Swedish Arts Council will pay the grant once the applicant has submitted the required number of copies specified in the conditional annex and confirmation from the translator that they have received the full fee specified in the application. Payment is only made to the bank account belonging to the legal person named in the application.

2.8. What conditions apply to awarded grants?

For this grant, general and special terms and conditions apply, which are set out in a conditional annex attached to the grant decision.

It is particularly important, as stated in section 2.7, to submit the material specified in the conditional annex, and for the translator to certify that they have been paid in accordance with the amount indicated in the application for the translator to receive. A special form is available at www.swedishliterature.se.

The publication/production shall be carried out according to plan and the grant shall be used in accordance with the terms and conditions formulated by the Swedish Arts Council. The decision, including the terms and conditions in force, is communicated to all applicants, as well as to the rightsholders and translators of each work.

If the publication/production is postponed and you cannot send the required material on time, the applicant shall notify the Swedish Arts Council hereof in good time. The Swedish Arts Council will then decide on whether to grant an extension of the reporting period.

2.9. How does the reporting work?

Reporting is done in accordance with what is stated in the terms and conditions in section 2.7, no later than on the date specified in the decision and the conditional annex.