

# Invitation to apply for VREF Next Gen study visit grant

**VREF invites Next Generation Scholars to apply for grants for short-term study visits at other (non-home) universities. The invitation is open on an ongoing basis until 31 October 2026, and the study visit should be carried out before 31 December 2026. VREF wishes to have a broad distribution of grants among universities, thus a maximum of one (1) grant will be awarded to the same home university. See detailed information, criteria and guidelines for applications below.**

## **BACKGROUND – VREF’S MISSION AND PROGRAMS**

The Volvo Research and Educational Foundations (VREF) support research and educational activities at universities and research institutes of academic standing which contribute to achieving its overall mission:

- To support the development of new knowledge on ideas, approaches and solutions that can contribute to equitable access and sustainable urban mobility;
- To support educational and outreach programs within the area of urban transport and mobility, broadly defined;
- To contribute to the dissemination and uptake of research results among university researchers, practitioners, decision makers and other relevant stakeholders;
- To support research, demonstration projects, and other initiatives that can contribute to processes of change within urban transport.

VREF’s activities are carried out within three main areas: Mobility & Access in African Cities, Informal and Shared Mobility in Low- and Middle-Income Countries, and Walking as a mode of Transport. Within these areas, VREF currently supports five international research programs:

- VREF International Research Program: Partnership for Research on Informal and Shared Mobility (PRISM)
- VREF International Research Program: The Walking Cities Lab: making walking for transport a global priority
- VREF African Research Program: Popular-to-Popular Transport Integration in Sub Saharan Africa (POINT)
- VREF African Research Program: Equitable Transport Access and Mobility in African Cities (ETAMAC)
- VREF African Research Program: Governing Urban Mobility (MID-UTA)

For more information about VREF and these research programs, see [www.vref.se](http://www.vref.se).

## **OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF THE VREF NEXT GEN STUDY VISIT GRANTS**

The overall objectives of VREF's Next Gen Study Visit Grants are:

1. to strengthen VREF's five currently funded international research programs (see above), and more specifically to contribute to scientific knowledge building within these programs;
2. to more generally consolidate and strengthen research approaches and results within VREF's community of researchers and students through comparative and/or other collaborative work;
3. to support professional development and provide opportunities for Next Generation Scholars within VREF's community to strengthen their research skills and academic capacity through collaborations with scholars at other universities.

## **WHAT TYPES OF WORK CAN BE FUNDED BY A VREF NEXT GEN STUDY VISIT GRANT?**

A VREF Next Gen Study Visit Grant (SVG) should primarily be used for carrying out comparative field work (data collection or comparative data analysis, interviews, surveys, observational studies, etc) or other locally situated work which can contribute to the empirical robustness of current VREF-funded research.

In addition, an SVG can also be used for the following types of activities as part of the study visit; the grant cannot, however, be used solely or primarily for such activities:

- Locally situated work and collaboration (such as conceptual or methodological work) with researchers at the host university which contributes to the applicant's ongoing research, including thesis work;
- To participate in short courses or other educational offerings at the host university;
- To plan and carry out seminars/seminar series, short courses or other educational activities in cooperation with researchers at the host university;
- To participate in a conference or workshop organised by VREF or otherwise prioritized by VREF

## **WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?**

This invitation is open to NextGen scholars (i.e. advanced master students, Ph.D. candidates, early career researchers within five years of Ph.D. degree) within VREFs Next Gen Scholars Community who wish to visit research teams or environments within a current VREF supported international research program (see list above);

## **WHAT THE GRANT COVERS, EXPECTATIONS, AND REPORTING**

Each SVG is limited to a maximum of 40 000 Swedish crowns (SEK). The grant should be used to cover costs that are directly related to the study visit, i.e. travel costs, accommodation, and other direct costs (e.g. costs for materials or supplies, visa costs). Salary costs, meals and/or per diem will not be covered by the grant.

VREF strongly recommends a time frame of 3-6 weeks for a study visit, depending upon the scope and direction of the proposed work.

Each study visit is expected to result in tangible research results (e.g. a jointly written paper, draft paper or text that contributes to ongoing VREF funded research, and/or for inclusion in the Next Gen scholar's thesis or project). VREF strongly recommends that the involved parties produce a collaborative written output of the visit.

When the study visit is completed, the NextGen scholar is expected to submit a final report to VREF which summarizes the work that has been carried out during the study visit, with particular emphasis on tangible results of the work (information on e.g. draft papers, thesis chapters, other texts, fieldwork results).

The final report should be submitted to VREF within one week after the study visit.

## **HOW TO APPLY**

- Applicant = the Next Gen Scholar who undertakes the study visit. The applicant is also the grantee, i.e. the recipient of an awarded VREF Study Visit Grant
- Home University = The university where the applicant is affiliated
- Responsible Supervisor = the applicant's supervisor, or equivalent senior scholar (research or project leader, head of department, etc).
- Host University = The university where the study visit takes place
- Responsible Host = the researcher at the host university who is responsible for the visit and who ensures active participation by scholar(s) at this university.

The application should be signed and submitted by the Responsible Supervisor, as well as confirmed by the Responsible Host.

The submission of the application shall be done in the form of one (1) pdf-file attached in an e-mail sent to the VREF Secretariat at email: [secretariat@vref.se](mailto:secretariat@vref.se). The VREF Secretariat will confirm receipt by giving a registration number for the application. The

VREF Secretariat will inform each applicant of VREF's decision within six weeks after the submission of the application<sup>1</sup>.

NB. Due to vacations, the VREF Secretariat will not be able to handle applications continuously during July and August, so the first decisions will not be taken before 1<sup>st</sup> September.

For questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at [secretariat@vref.se](mailto:secretariat@vref.se).

The application should be structured as follows:

**Section A: Basic Information (incl contact details under item A1-A3)**

**A1. Applicant:** Name of the visiting Next Gen Scholar, complete home address, telephone and email address.

**A2. Home University:** Full name, city, and country of the applicant's Home University.

**A3. Responsible Supervisor:** Name and e-mail address of the applicant's supervisor, or equivalent senior scholar (research or project leader, head of department, etc).

**A4. Host University:** Full name, city, and country of the Host University (i.e. the university which will be visited by the applicant).

**A5. Responsible Host:** Name and e-mail address of the researcher at the Host University who is responsible for the visit.

**A6. Confirmation from Responsible Host** (e.g. a copy of an e-mail from the Responsible Host to the Applicant) which confirms that the Applicant will be well received and provided with necessary support or resources (collaborative researcher time, staff time, other support) for the duration of the planned study visit. The invitation should also include information about any general fees for visiting scholars and students that the host university claims.

**A7. VREF Program:** Title of the current VREF-funded international research program that the study visit will be connected and/or contribute to (see list above).

**A8. Dates** of the study visit

**A9. Budget:** estimated expenses, which are structured as below, well motivated and clearly detailed in SEK. Note that the maximum Study Visit Grant is 40 000 SEK, which can be matched by sources other than VREF in order to extend the duration of the

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research exchange. The overall budget can thus be a higher amount than the grant requested from VREF.

- Travel costs (e.g. flights, local transportation)
- Accommodation costs in detail
- Other costs (e.g. extra material supply costs directly related to the research exchange) in detail

**A10. Requested grant:** The amount you request from VREF

### **Section B: The Study Visit Program (ca 2-4 pages)**

**B1. Motivation and benefit for the applicant:** The Responsible Supervisor should describe how the planned work during the study visit is anticipated to contribute to the Applicant's academic development, including e.g. the contribution to the Applicant's thesis and/or research project.

**B2. Purpose and benefit for the VREF-funded international research program:** The Responsible Host should describe how the planned work during the study visit is anticipated to contribute to the current VREF-funded international research program.

**B3. Work Plan for the Study Visit:** A plan for the Applicant's scientific and/or educational work which will be carried out during the study visit. This work plan should include concrete goals for the study visit, as well as concrete plans for collaboration through e.g. comparative field work, educational activities, and expected tangible outcomes/results.

Please note that sections B2 and B3 are very important for VREF's review and decision, so make an effort to clearly present the direction, content, and scope of the planned research activities, methods to be used, and how the specific work will complement, extend, or otherwise concretely contribute to ongoing or already planned field work (and/or other activities) in the VREF-funded international research program.

**B4. Plan for presentation:** The work plan should also include a plan for a presentation by the applicant of her/his ongoing work, to be held in an appropriate forum at the host department (e.g. through a lecture, seminar or roundtable discussion). To help the scholar to gain visibility at the host department early on, as well as facilitate contacts with relevant scholars in the host department, it is recommended that this presentation takes place at the start of the study visit.