**SPARC**: Scientific Projects to Accelerate Research and Collaboration

The Dept. of IT at UU has decided to prioritize and stimulate research cooperation with GE Healthcare [http://www3.gehealthcare.se/](http://www3.gehealthcare.se/), in particular the Testa center. Testa Center, in part financed by Vinnova, offers a bioprocess pilot-scale facility where researchers can test and evaluate their technical and biological discoveries. It will offer unique possibilities for collaboration between academia and industry.

One way to catalyze research initiatives is through strategic allocation of resources. SPARC is a mechanism whereby staff members from the department submit project proposals for comparably small start-up funding of collaborative projects. Projects at IT UU to be carried out in collaboration with research and development staff at GE Healthcare are sought in this call.

**SPARC Goals**

The overall goal of SPARC this year is to catalyze new research by creating collaborations in the area of IT for biomedical processing specifically with GE Healthcare in Uppsala.

Successful SPARC proposals are those that push the department in the direction of our strategic efforts and facilitate new collaborative interactions. The intention is to fund projects that could not be readily funded by other mechanisms (such as VR, SSF and Vinnova) because they would be viewed as too risky or lacking in preliminary results.

In parallel with catalyzing science, an important goal of SPARC funding is to build a base for attracting larger external funding (preliminary data, joint collaborative publications etc).

**Mechanisms, application and expectations**

SPARC grants will be modest in size, <250kSEK direct costs for < one year, and require a 2-page application (not including CV and references). The total budget from Dept. of IT is at least 600 kSEK. The proposal should consist of

1) Project Title, Principal Investigator (Dept. of IT staff member), Co-Investigators and Collaborators (attach letter of commitment)
2) Summary (Clear, concise summary of project and its goals)
3) Rationale for SPARC funding (Describing importance of project and appropriateness for SPARC support)
4) Project Plan (Outline, intermediate milestones, division of responsibilities, and goals, such as publication and/or joint grant application.)
5) Budget and Budget Justification
6) CV of PI, maximum of 2 pages

The submission deadline is September 30, 2018. Signed applications should be sent by email to biomedIT@it.uu.se

The proposals must clearly state the importance of the science proposed and how it fits the goals of SPARC funding. The applicants should argue convincingly why the project is appropriate for SPARC support but not yet ready for regular funding. The proposal should include a concise narrative that communicates a compelling rationale for the project. The roles and responsibilities of co-PIs, collaborators, and any other participants should be clearly outlined. The GE Healthcare collaborator’s commitment should be well defined and confirmed by signing the proposal. The milestones should specify estimated results attained by October 2019,

---

1 The idea of SPARC funding comes from the Broad institute of Harvard and MIT, where it has been successfully used to ‘sparc’ new collaborative projects since 2006. This text is based on how SPARC is set up at the Broad, but adjusted to fit the Dept. of IT at UU.
at which time funded projects will present preliminary results and plans for the near future in a follow-up seminar.

All employees with a PhD degree are allowed to apply for SPARC funding. Applications will be reviewed by a committee selected by the group of program-responsible Professors (PAP-group). The PAP-group will make the final decision. Review and notification should be ready within one month of the application deadline.

**Evaluation criteria**

1) Relevance of project with respect to the goals of the SPARC call and biomedical IT
2) Novelty of the core idea of the project
3) Feasibility of the project plan
4) Potential of the involved researchers

**What can be funded by SPARC**

- Salaries for Dept of IT employees
- Services from third part
- Material and rental of equipment
- Meetings and travel costs

Salaries for external collaborators will not be funded

**Follow-up**

The PI(s) of funded SPARC projects will be expected to present the progress of the project in a follow-up joint seminar with GE Healthcare in October 2019. In addition they will be expected to submit two 1-2 paragraph progress reports: 1) Project Completion Report (by 1-year anniversary date) describing project status and whether or not the Aims were met, 2) Project Impact Report (1 year after Project Completion Report), describing what impact the project has had on the department, including science catalyzed and additional funding secured.

**Contact**

*IT UU*

Alexander Medvedev  alexander.medvedev@it.uu.se
Robin Strand  robin.strand@it.uu.se
Carl Nettelblad  carl.nettelblad@it.uu.se

*GE Healthcare*

Jesper Hedberg  jesper.hedberg@ge.com
Jens Hammarlund  jens.hammarlund@ge.com