



**Vetenskapsrådet**

Date

201

Reg. No

2.1-2017-04311

Administrator

Maria Thuveson

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## **Decision to discontinue a research grant awarded**

### **Decision**

The Swedish Research Council is discontinuing the payment of funds to the project “Climate change effects on top-down predation in aquatic ecosystems”, reg. No 2017-04311, as from 8 January 2018.

The decision is associated with a qualifying period during which Peter Eklöv is prevented from applying for new grants from the Swedish Research Council. The qualifying period lasts until 6 December 2019.

### **Background**

On 26 October 2017, the Swedish Research Council decided to award a grant of 3 300 000 SEK in total over four years to the project “Climate change effects on top-down predation in aquatic ecosystems”. The applicant and also project manager for the research was Peter Eklöv and the administrating organisation was Uppsala University. On 31 October 2017, Peter Eklöv and Lars Tranvik, as representative of Uppsala University, confirmed their respective undertakings according to the general and specific terms and conditions for the grant.

In a decision dated 6 December 2017, Uppsala University found that Peter Eklöv was guilty of scientific misconduct in that he has intentionally breached the provisions regarding ethical approval for experiments on animals. Uppsala University informed the Swedish Research Council about this on 7 December 2017.

### **Reasons for the decision**

Chapter 1, Section 16 of the Higher Education Ordinance (SFS 1993:100) states that a university that becomes aware of suspected misconduct in research at the university must investigate these suspicions. Uppsala University received a notice of suspected misconduct in research and, as prescribed by the Higher Education Ordinance, investigated the matter and found that Peter Eklöv was guilty of misconduct in research.

Research grants from the Swedish Research Council shall be subject to terms and conditions. If the terms and conditions are not complied with, the Swedish Research Council may decide to discontinue payment of the grant. This is provided for in Section 24 of the Ordinance (SFS 2009:975) with Instructions for the Swedish Research Council. The Swedish Research Council’s general terms and conditions for grants to research state, among other things, that misconduct in research or other

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## Vetenskapsrådet

unethical actions constitute grounds for a decision by the Swedish Research Council to discontinue payment of a research grant.

In a decision dated 6 December 2017, Uppsala University found Peter Eklöv guilty of scientific misconduct in that he has intentionally breached the provisions regarding ethical approval for experiments on animals. A decision where the higher education institution that is entitled to decide on the matter finds that a researcher has been guilty of misconduct in research constitutes grounds for the Swedish Research Council to discontinue payment of a grant.

Experiments requiring ethical approval of experiments on animals have been carried out without such approval having been obtained. Peter Eklöv had specific responsibility for ensuring such approval was obtained. In a scientific article for the periodical Science, Peter Eklöv also claimed that approval from the Ethical Review Board had been obtained for the experiments in question. The Swedish Research Council therefore considers that it is a matter of such unethical actions as constitute grounds for discontinuing the payment of the research grant. The fact that the unethical actions have occurred during research other than that for which financing was awarded on 26 October 2017 does not alter the Swedish Research Council's opinion.

In order to prevent a grant recipient who has breached the terms and conditions for the grant from immediately applying for new funds, a decision to discontinue a grant may be associated with a qualifying period during which an applicant covered by the decision is prevented from applying for new grants from the Swedish Research Council. The Swedish Research Council considers that misconduct in research and unethical actions are such breaches against the terms and conditions where a qualifying period should be imposed. In this case, the qualifying period should be set at two years from the date of the decision by the higher education institution.

This decision has been made by Sven Stafström, Director General, in the presence of Ann Fust, Executive Director, Anna Hörnlund, Chief Legal Officer and Maria Thuveson, Manager of the Department of Research Funding, who reported on the matter. In the final administration, Lars Kloo, Secretary General, and Nils-Eric Sahlin, Chair of the Swedish Research Council's Expert Panel for Ethics, have also participated.

Sven Stafström  
*Director-General*

Maria Thuveson  
*Department Manager*

Copy to the Vice-Chancellor and Registrar at Uppsala University.



## **Vetenskapsrådet**

### *Appeals referral for public authorities*

If you wish to appeal the decision, please write to the Swedish Research Council. In your letter, please state the decision appealed against and the change you request. The appeal must have been received by the Swedish Research Council no later than three weeks from the date the decision was notified. The Swedish Research Council will pass the appeal on to the Administrative Court in Stockholm for review, if the Swedish Research Council does not itself change the decision in the way you have requested.