



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Vice-Chancellor

24 April, 2026

Dear colleague,

In 2027, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences will carry out its third university-wide, external research assessment called KoN2027¹. For us, the input and external perspective from peers is of key importance to develop the quality and impact of our research. We would therefore be delighted if you, as an expert in your field, would be willing to share your knowledge and experience with us as a member of one of the assessment panels.

Our goal is to make KoN2027 a forward-looking process that stimulates mutual learning and helps the organisation identify strengths, weaknesses and development opportunities. A key feature of KoN2027 is therefore strong departmental ownership.

Each department has carefully selected and nominated panel members, who can act as 'critical friends'. Your role as a panel member will thus be to help the department explore how their research can develop based on their respective missions and profiles. The goal is not to score past performances or compare departments with each other, but rather to support each one to grow and excel in its own context.

It is our ambition that the process will stimulate open conversations and critical reflection, spark novel ideas and generate insightful and constructive recommendations for the future.

We hope that we will have the pleasure and privilege of welcoming you to SLU for KoN2027!

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Maria Knutson Wedel'.

Maria Knutson Wedel,
Vice-Chancellor

¹ KoN is an abbreviation of 'Kvalitet och Nyttå', which translates to 'Quality and Impact'

Background and scope

KoN2027 and SLU's quality assurance system

KoN2027 is one of the cornerstones of SLU's quality assurance (QA) system for research and environmental monitoring and assessment, which has been in place since 2022.

The QA process starts at the departmental level. It is centred around a self-assessment that is carried out every four years and alternates between an internal and an external process (KoN). In the QA's first iteration in 2023, SLU's internal process resulted in quality reports. In these, each department identified measurements to be implemented and tracked until the next assessment, which is KoN2027. In this iteration, the panel recommendations will feed into the next cycle of quality assurance work, to be followed by a new internal process after four years.

The QA system was co-developed with the departments and took as its starting point the open question, "What is research quality?". The answers highlighted a broad range of aspects that characterise or are prerequisites for research quality. These aspects, aggregated into quality areas, make up the QA framework.

The QA system's recognition of diverse contributions to research aligns with the principles of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA), which SLU joined in 2023. The assessment process and background information of KoN2027 have thus been designed to reflect CoARA principles.

Doctoral education and environmental monitoring and assessment

The doctoral education is closely integrated with the research and will therefore be included in the analysis. In addition, environmental monitoring and assessment (EMA) forms a part of some departments' activities. For those departments, the panels are requested to also include the EMA in their evaluation.

Undergraduate and Master's studies are covered by a separate QA system and are not part of the KoN2027 evaluation.

Process and output

Reading material

By early November 2026, panel members will receive a set of documents to review in preparation for the site visit.

The documents include several components. First, there will be *data* on the department's staff profile, funding profile, bibliometric data, etc. The data sets will be accompanied by a *context description*, which will provide an overview of the department and the narrative to the data. *Quality reports* (see above) for research and environmental monitoring, and for the doctoral education will also be provided. Finally, panel members will receive access to the *assessment tool* used by the departments in their self-assessment process to ensure that the panel's work covers the full scope of research quality as defined in the QA system.

In addition, general information about the Swedish higher education system and research context (including funding models) and about SLU will be provided.

Meetings

Each department will plan the site visit in dialogue with their panel. It is recommended that the dates for the visit—which should occur in the period between January and June 2027—should be set by June 2026. The site visits will last two or three days and will take place at one of SLU's campuses (Umeå, Umeå or Alnarp), depending on where the main part of the department is located.

Prior to the site visit, the department, in dialogue with their panel, may choose to organise an online pre-meeting to, for example, respond to questions regarding the reading material and/or to plan and arrange practical issues in relation to the site visit.

All panel members will be invited to a preparatory online meeting with SLU's leadership in November 2026. At the meeting, the panels will be given a presentation of the university and an overview of the Swedish higher education landscape.

Report

The outcome of each panel's work is a written report for which a template will be provided. The report should be based on the reading material and information obtained and observations made during the site visit.

The panel recommendations will feed into the next cycle of their assigned department's quality assurance work and, ultimately, support the development of quality and impact of research.

Practical information

Timeline

By June 2026	Panel members and departments have agreed the dates for the site visits
Early November 2026	Panel members receive reading material
End of November 2026	Panel members invited to online information meeting with university leadership
Before site visit	Optional: Panel members meet online with department
January –June 2027	Site visits, typically two or three days, at one of the SLU's main campuses (Ultuna, Umeå or Alnarp)
During the site visit	First draft of the panel report to be ready and presented to the department
Within two weeks after the site visit	Final report is due

List of reading material

1. Data set
2. Context description
3. Quality reports
(1. Research and Environmental monitoring and 2. Doctoral education)
4. Assessment tool
5. Overview of SLU and the Swedish higher education system

Compensation and travel arrangements

Panel members will be offered remuneration for their services amounting to 30 kSEK (approx. €3000). Panel chairs will be offered an additional remuneration of 10 kSEK (approx. €1000).

SLU will arrange and cover expenses for travel and accommodation in relation to the site visit.

Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact KoN2027@slu.se