

# SNAC POLICY

## applicable from 2008-01-01

### 1. Mission

The Swedish National Allocations Committee, SNAC, is a subcommittee of the Swedish National Infrastructure for Computing, SNIC. SNIC is a metacenter, comprising six Member Centers providing the SNIC resources. The mission of SNIC is to coordinate and develop high end computing and storage capacity for Swedish research. In this process, SNAC assists by maximizing the efficient use of Swedish computational, visualization and data-intensive computing facilities available to the Swedish research community, and by assembling documentation and evaluating the use of such resources within SNIC. This includes:

- Providing an entry point to computing and storage resources by providing test accounts and small-size allocations. Applications for such allocations are handled locally at the SNIC centers.
- Providing medium-size allocations for which applications can be submitted at any time to any of the SNIC centers via a unified web form. The evaluation is performed locally and assesses only the feasibility of using the requested resources.
- Providing prioritized access to large-scale computing and storage facilities by a centralized allocation procedure. Calls for such applications are issued twice a year by SNAC, and SNAC also evaluates the applications and decides on the allocations. The evaluation is based on scientific merit, need for the resources, feasibility of efficient use of the requested resources, and impact.
- Providing reports on the use of all resources covered by SNIC agreements, including statistics on applications, allocations, actual usage and research results. This includes small- and medium-size allocations, large-size allocations, and special allocations on user-specific resources.

### 2. Organization

SNAC has a chair and a sufficient number of members for each scientific, engineering or other discipline necessary for the efficient implementation of its mission. SNAC is responsible to the board of directors for SNIC. The SNAC members are appointed by SNIC for three-year terms. SNAC is assisted by a Working Group consisting of one member from each SNIC center, appointed by the respective center directors. For the preparation of the annual report and the maintenance of the SNAC web site, SNAC is also assisted by the SNIC Coordinator.

### 3. Responsibilities

#### 3.1 SNAC

*Small size allocations:* SNAC is responsible for assembling reports on the usage of the resources.

*Medium size allocations:* SNAC is responsible for specifying and coordinating the application procedure and for assembling reports on the usage of the resources.

*Large size allocations:* SNAC runs the application procedure and specifies the allocations. SNAC evaluates and assigns a priority to each application. The priority is based on scientific merit, need for the resources, feasibility of efficient use of the requested resources, and impact. SNAC carries out the allocations for the nationally available resources. The technical evaluation and the assessment of the feasibility of using the requested resources is performed in collaboration with the Working Group. SNAC is also responsible for assembling reports on the usage of the resources.

*Special allocations on user-specific systems:* SNAC is responsible for assembling reports on the usage of the resources.

SNAC prepares a publicly available annual report describing the current resources covered by agreements with SNIC and their utilization, and on request also relevant scientific results obtained using them.

### **3.2 Chair and working group**

The SNAC chair holds overall responsibility for the function of the Committee. This includes:

- Defining the web-based medium and large size allocation procedures
- Communication of the allocations processes to applicants
- Issuing calls for applications for the large size allocation procedure
- Assigning applications for large size allocations to committee members
- Communications and decided large size allocations to applicants
- Communication of decided large size allocations to the SNIC Member Centers
- Co-ordination of committee meetings
- Documentation of established allocations and evaluations of applications for large size allocations

For the large size allocation procedure, the Working Group is responsible for communication with applicants about the status of their applications, for requesting additional information as may be required to assure completeness of applications; for Committee meeting arrangements, and for Committee and operational reports as deemed desirable.

The Working Group, assisted by the SNIC Coordinator, is also responsible for the annual report and the Committee's Web site.

### **3.3 SNIC**

SNIC is responsible for the appointment of the SNAC members and for funding the SNAC operations.

### **3.4 SNIC Member Centers**

The SNIC Member Centers make physical resources, and human resources in support of such resources, available to SNAC according to agreements with SNIC. The Member Centers are responsible for implementing an application procedure for small size allocations, and the unified application procedure for medium size allocations according to the policy described below. The Member Centers are also responsible for the implementation of the allocation of large size resources decided by SNAC.

Furthermore, the Member Centers are responsible for reporting the usage of resources covered by agreements with SNIC. On request, the Member Centers provide SNAC with current

information, relevant for the allocation and usage reports, regarding usage statistics and account status for the SNIC resources.

## 4. Allocation of SNIC resources

For both the small- and medium-scale allocation procedure and the procedure for large-scale allocations, on-line applications are submitted. The application forms are set up by SNAC in collaboration with the Working Group.

### 4.1 Application procedure for small size allocations

#### Call for applications

A simple and flexible local application procedure is used. Applications for test accounts and small size allocations may be submitted at any time using an on-line application form hosted by the respective SNIC Member Centers. When submitting the application, the applicant agrees on reporting the results obtained using SNIC resources on request.

#### Application form

The format of the application form is decided by the SNIC Member Center. However, it should provide sufficient information for the documentation of the use of SNIC facilities, including principal investigator (PI) and project title.

#### Allocation of resources

The allocation of resources is carried out by the SNIC Member Centers. All feasible applications are granted a small size allocation and relevant user support. The amount of resources granted in such allocations is given by the *small size limit*, which is approximately the same at all Member Centers. The duration time for small size allocations is decided by the Member Centers.

To facilitate efficient use of existing resources, two Member Centers may, e.g. through their members of the working group, decide to transfer an application from one Member Center to another. Applications requesting facilities which are only available at another Member Center than at which it was submitted should be transferred in this way.

### 4.2 Application procedure for medium size allocations

#### Call for applications

Applications for medium size allocation may be submitted at any time using a unified on-line application form hosted by the respective SNIC Member Centers. The forms are directly accessible from the SNAC web site where the available resources are described. When submitting the application, the applicant agrees on reporting the results obtained using SNIC resources on request.

#### Application form

The application form should provide sufficient information for the documentation of the use of SNIC facilities. It should include:

- The type of resource and monthly allocation applied for
- Principal investigator (PI). The PI must be a senior scientist in Swedish academia
- A project title
- A brief project description (abstract)

- A brief technical description (codes used, technical requirements for software and hardware)

### **Allocation of resources**

The evaluation of the application and the allocation of resources is carried out by the SNIC Member Center. All feasible applications are granted a small size allocation and relevant user support. If additional computational resources are available, further allocation of resources to the project may be granted after that a local assessment of the feasibility of using the resource applied for is performed. The size of such allocations should normally not exceed a maximum value, the *medium size limit*. Typically, only a few different sizes of allocations are granted. The duration time for the allocations is 6 or 12 months, and the allocations can be extended using the same web form as for the initial application.

To facilitate efficient use of existing resources, two Member Centers may, e.g. through their members of the working group, decide to transfer applications from one Member Center to another. Applications requesting facilities which are only available at another Member Center than at which it was submitted should be transferred in this way.

## **4.3 Application procedure for large size allocation**

### **Call for applications**

SNAC issues calls for applications for large-scale computing projects twice annually:

- a first call in April, resulting in allocations effective July 1st
- a second call in October, resulting in allocations effective January 1st

In the application, the applicant agrees on reporting the results obtained using SNIC resources.

### **Application form**

The application form should provide should also provide information for the documentation of the use of SNIC facilities and sufficient information for SNAC to judge the scientific or engineering merit, the impact of the requested allocation, the feasibility of using the requested resources and the consequences of partial support. Essential elements of the application are:

- The type of facility and monthly allocation applied for.
- Principal investigator (PI). The PI must be a senior scientist in Swedish academia.
- A project title
- A brief project description (abstract)
- A project description and technical description in sufficient detail to judge scientific and engineering merit or impact, need for national computational, visualization and long-term storage facilities, and feasibility of using the resources applied for.
- Activity report (for applications for continuation of large size allocations)

### **Assignment, distribution and evaluation criteria**

All submitted applications are available to all SNAC members on the web. The Working Group assigns each application to one member of SNAC for evaluation. Applications for test accounts and small- and medium size allocations are not evaluated, but are instead directly transferred by the Working Group to the relevant Member Center(s). SNAC only considers applications for allocations larger than the medium scale limit within the application procedure for large size allocations.

Access to large-scale resources within SNIC is granted based on

- Scientific merit, i.e., to researchers performing internationally competitive research.
- The need of leading edge computing, long-term storage and/or visualization facilities.
- Future impact.
- Feasibility of using the requested resources.

Access to large-scale computational facilities is normally granted for 6 or 12 months. Access to national long-term storage facilities is granted for a specified, normally longer, period. For continuation projects the achieved results from the preceding project period is taken into account.

### **Review**

For each application an on-line evaluation form is completed by the assigned SNAC member. The evaluation of applications will result in a grade to each of several specific criteria. These grades will be accompanied by the reviewer's comments. Additionally, each application will be given an overall priority level:

Priority 1: Projects which should receive resources

Priority 2: Projects which merit allocation, depending on available resources after priority level 1 has been allocated

Priority 3: Projects which should not receive any allocation

If deemed necessary, the Committee member will consult other experts through a peer review procedure. An evaluation form is then completed by each external reviewer.

Note that applications and evaluation forms are public information according to Swedish law.

### **Review meeting**

Prior to each review meeting all evaluation forms are made available to all Committee members on the web. At the meeting, the SNIC Member Centers are represented by the members of the Working Group.

At the review meeting the Committee assigns resources to each application. A list of all applications, including recourses applied for, actual allocations, and a brief motivation for the decision is produced.

### **Feedback to applicants**

SNAC documents the results of its evaluation and provide feedback to applicants, consisting the priority level assigned by SNAC and the reasons for it. The feedback also contains information about actual allocation.

## **5. Reporting of results**

The Committee produces an annual report. The collection of information for and preparation of the annual report is performed by the Working Group, assisted by the SNIC coordinator. The annual report is a part of the annual report for SNIC. The Committee also produces additional reports as may be required to effectively support the Swedish Academic Community. The Annual Report contains:

- Statistics on success rate of applications

- Statistics on allocations and actual usage

The Annual Report is to a large extent based on the submitted material from each of the projects in terms of publications and reports.

## **6. Web presence**

The Committee, with the assistance of the Working Group and the SNIC coordinator, maintains a Web site outlined below.

### **Projects**

Selected information from applications for resources will be made available at the National Allocations Committees web site. Information on the progress of each project will be updated on an annual basis. Lists of resulting publications will be included as they become available. The site will thus provide documentation of on-going research using resources covered by agreements with SNIC as well as documentation of long term results of investments in such resources

### **Resources**

The Committee web site will contain a current list and description of resources covered by agreements with SNIC, including information about their current and past usage. Information about expected major changes in resources will also be posted at this site.

### **Application information**

The Web site will contain application forms for on-line applications. Information will also be available about critical dates and the composition of the National Allocations Committee.