

Press release

Sundsvall, April 12, 2021

SCA's Christian Kugge to receive the Gunnar Sundblad Research Foundation award of SEK 700,000

Christian Kugge of the SCA R&D Centre is to receive the Competence Development Award for 2021 from the Gunnar Sundblad Research Foundation. He is being awarded the prize for his ambition to enhance the efficiency of the process to convert lignin from the forest into high added-value chemicals.



The core of SCA's business is the growing forest, Europe's largest private forest holding. Around this unique resource, we have built a well-developed value chain based on renewable raw material from our own and others' forests. We offer packaging paper, pulp, wood products, renewable energy, services for forest owners and efficient transport solutions.

2020 the forest products company SCA had approximately 4,000 employees and sales amounted to approximately SEK 18.4 bn.

SCA was founded in 1929 and has its headquarters in Sundsvall, Sweden. More information at <http://www.sca.com>

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The prize will allow Christian Kugge, for instance, to gain world-leading knowledge through a research exchange with Australia.

The commendation for the award is as follows: “By combining fundamental catalysis with applied research in cooperation with world-class researchers, Christian Kugge is creating new opportunities for the conversion of the forest industry residual stream, lignin. Accordingly, the potential of lignin is increased as a source of raw materials for new materials and biofuels.”

The prize money is SEK 700,000 and will be presented by King Carl XVI Gustaf at a virtual ceremony on April 20. The prize money will be used for the exchange of knowledge internationally and in Sweden about process- and product development within Swedish forest industries. For SCA, the research and knowledge from Christian Kugge are important not least within the framework of the plans to build a new biorefinery adjacent to Östrand pulp mill.

The residual product black liquor is a fundamental element of this development work. Black liquor contains lignin, which is currently burned for energy. The goal of Christian’s research is to extract a part of the lignin and convert it into a high added-value raw material for fuel for the automotive and aerospace industries.

Christian will gain new knowledge in the upcoming exchange with the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in Australia. At RMIT, Professors Karen Wilson and Adam Lee recently published a breakthrough article in the area of cascade catalysis, which is a key step in the processing chain. Due to the pandemic, the sights are set on conducting the exchange with Australia in the spring of 2022.

“Of course, working with the best in this field is highly stimulating! It is important to create the combination of applied research provided by us at SCA with the fundamental research at RMIT to enable strong research results. I am looking forward to gaining access to an advanced equipment park and being able to build further on the network between researchers in Australia and Sweden,” says Christian Kugge.

Australia is not a new acquaintanceship for Christian Kugge. He himself has lived and worked as a researcher in Canberra and Melbourne before returning to Sweden, where he works at SCA in Sundsvall. A bonus is that RMIT also sponsors trainee exchanges and this will hopefully also lead to increased collaboration between SCA and the research activities in Australia.

In addition to the international exchange, part of the prize money is also earmarked for building up a network in Sweden. It will promote the Swedish forest products industries’ efforts to develop their research into fossil-free energy from forest raw material. This will include researchers from several Swedish universities.

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About the Gunnar Sundblad Research Foundation

The Gunnar Sundblad Research Foundation's annual Competence Development Award has been presented since 2007. Its objective is to promote the development of the Swedish pulp and paper industries' transition toward new and improved products and services. Read more at www.sundbladsfonden.se. The Board of the Foundation is appointed by the Swedish Forest Industries.

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