

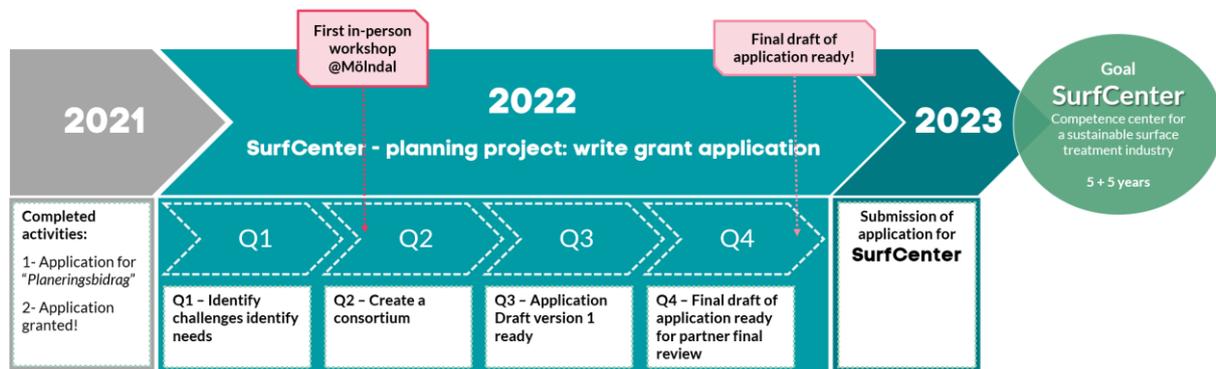
SurfCenter - Competence Centre for a sustainable surface treatment industry

- The planning phase

Sustainability has traditionally been a prioritized area for the surface treatment industry. The nature of the processes and materials involved push the branch forward in the search for new and improved alternatives to achieve more environmentally friendly production systems and comply with new and increasing regulations without undermining quality and costs. Today, this type of initiatives is often handled as individual, separate projects, in small constellations. However, with the increased need for a rapid change and transition to meet the climate challenge, a more efficient approach is required.

During 2021, RISE initiated an effort to set-up a competence centre for a sustainable surface treatment industry: **SurfCenter**. The SurfCenter initiative understands a competence centre as a group of actors, with a common vision and strategic idea for building a long-term excellent research environment where the results can be shared between the parties and promote the creation of new innovations. The purpose with SurfCenter is to be a comprehensive effort to overcome the **sustainability challenges** (economical, social and ecological), faced by the surface treatment industry with a long-term **perspective of ten years**. By bringing together research institutes, universities, and companies (from OEMs to SMEs), SurfCenter will be a centre for excellent research focused on developing the best available technologies for rapid incorporation into production lines and looking over the entire life cycle of the processes at issue.

The first successful activity towards establishing SurfCenter was the approval, in November 2021, of financing by Vinnova to run a one-year planning project¹ with the objective to build a consortium and develop the ideas of the competence centre into a viable long-term project. This planning project is expected to result in a competitive application for the upcoming Vinnova-call for the Competence Centre, which will tentatively open in the autumn of 2022. Therefore, during the first half of 2022 we will lay the groundwork to identify the common challenges within the surface treatment industry and build a strong consortium. During the second part of the year, the work will focus on defining and conceptualizing the competence centre and writing the application to Vinnova. A simple time-plan is shown in the image below.



¹ The SurfCenter planning project is lead by RISE and has the support of Volvo AB, Scania, Ikea of Sweden, SAAB AB, Provexa Technology, Ionbond, Svensk Pulverlackteknisk Förening, Svensk Ytbehandlingsförening, Linköping University, Fraunhofer-Chalmers Center, and IVL Svenska miljöinstitutet. Note: For the SurfCenter competence center application we also want new partners to join!

What will SurfCenter offer?

This is the main question that we need to answer, and it can only be answered if all the interested parties (companies, research institutes and academia) sit together and have an open discussion about the current status and the needs of the surface treatment industry.

The vision is that SurfCenter will gather applied R&D in the surface treatment area with focus on the need of Swedish companies for a sustainable and resilient development. For instance, experts within sustainability, circular economy and life cycle analysis will collaborate with process and material specialists to overcome the challenges of this industry, ensure the Swedish competitiveness in the global scale, and, in the long run, keep the production in Sweden.

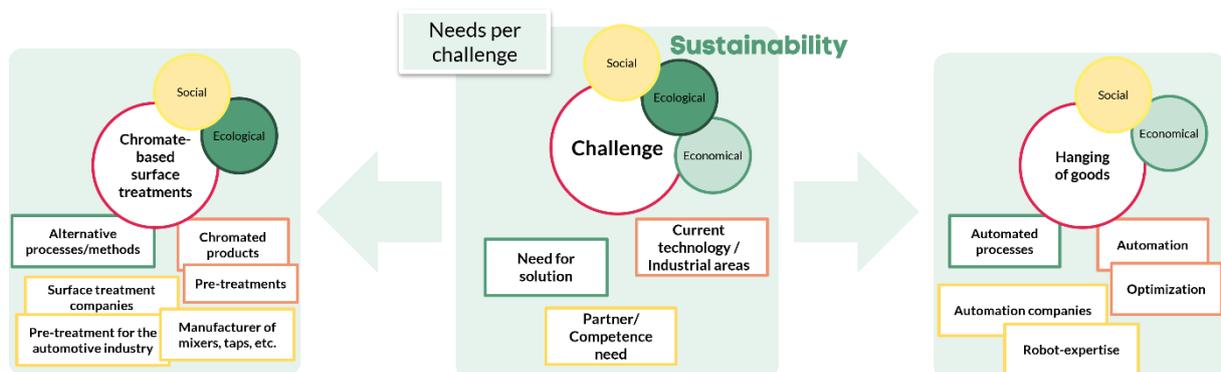
The centre will enable this through:

- Access to test beds at institutes, universities and companies
- Initiate and implement projects according to the impact logic hatched in the planning phase
- Initiation and implementation of PhD studies
- Close collaboration within the partnership

What can we do now?

To build a competence centre is a large undertaking that requires a multidisciplinary group of people from companies and research organizations that can define a vision and a strategy for the centre. Therefore, **we are inviting all interested parties to participate of the first planning workshop for SurfCenter to be held the 21st of April 2022, in Mölndal** (see the information box for more details).

A starting point for the discussion is the idea that SurfCenter can focus on general issues such as reducing the CO₂ footprint, reducing the use of energy and resources, complying with new regulations, substitution of fossil-based materials for biobased materials, circularity of surface treated components, etc. by identifying the particular challenges associated to the surface treatment industry. For this, **some questions we need to answer are: what the current technologies/processes being used are, what type of sustainability effect do we expect, what possible solutions exist, what type of competence and partnerships are needed?** Some examples are illustrated below.



SURFCENTER PLANNING WORKSHOP

GOAL

Planning the activities and roadmap of the competence center SurfCenter

DATE

21 April 2022

TIME

10:00-15:00

LOCATION

RISE - Argongatan 30, Mölndal

LAST REGISTRATION DAY

15 April 2022

PRICE

Free of charge

NUMBER OF SEATS

50

FOR MORE INFORMATION, REGISTRATION & PROGRAM visit:

<https://www.ri.se/en/event/surfcenter-planning-workshop>