



CENTRUM FÖR TJÄNSTEFORSKNING
CTF | SERVICE RESEARCH CENTER



Annual report 2025

Vision & Mission

CTF's vision and mission is to contribute to scientific knowledge and development of private and public organisations and the wider society through research on value-creation through service.



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Director's report

2025 marked CTF's 39th year of research and collaboration. CTF strengthened its position as a leading service research center, creating value for academia, organisations, and society through high-quality science, global engagement, and close collaboration.



During the year, our researchers produced over 120 scholarly publications and conference contributions, advancing the development of service research and related fields. Together with international partners, we published two leading handbooks guiding future research. Three doctoral degrees and one licentiate degree were awarded, and three new Associate Professors were appointed, strengthening our academic environment and research leadership. New doctoral students also joined our team. Through innovative research approaches and active participation in international academic networks, CTF continues to advance knowledge in service innovation, sustainability transitions, mobility, digitalisation, artificial intelligence, and public service development.

Collaboration remains a cornerstone of CTF's activities. We worked with over 60 organisations in the public and private sectors, contributed to international evaluation panels and funding bodies, including the Marie Curie program and the Research Council of Norway, and delivered keynote and invited presentations in more than 20 cities worldwide. These engagements strengthen our international visibility while ensuring that our research remains closely connected to pressing societal challenges.

Several events showcased the relevance of our work: CTF produced new episodes of the seminar series *Värdeskapande samtal* (Value-creating conversations), organised *Kundinnovationsdagen* (Customer Innovation Day) within *Unfold Värmland 2025*, and co-hosted major academic events, such as *QUIS19*. Through seminars, public events, and media engagement, our research continues to reach broad audiences and contribute insights on digital health, circular economy, AI-driven innovation, and future mobility. During the year, we also deepened research on how complex societal services such as those shaping education, health, democracy, and welfare are designed, organised, and sustained.

These achievements are made possible by the trust and long-term collaboration with our partners, combining academic excellence with societal impact. Looking ahead, 2026 will mark CTF's 40th anniversary an important milestone to celebrate our history and look forward to the next phase of our development. I would like to sincerely thank our members, partners, and Karlstad University for their continued support.

Per Kristensson
CTF director

Chair's view

During 2025, geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainty and accelerating technological change have reshaped the context in which organisations and institutions operate. While global sustainability commitments remain, the year has shown that real transformation – in climate, economies and societies – is far more complex than setting targets.



In such times, knowledge becomes one of society's most important resources. Universities and research centres play a crucial role in helping us understand complex transformations and navigate the path forward. This requires strong academic freedom, and at a time when it is questioned in parts of the world, open, and evidence-based research is more important than ever.

Against this backdrop, the work carried out at CTF at Karlstad University becomes particularly important. For nearly four decades, the centre has explored how value is created through services, a perspective increasingly central in today's knowledge-intensive, service-driven economy.

A clear expression of this contribution is CTF's strong scientific output in 2025, including a wide range of studies and two international research handbooks developed with leading scholars, which help shape future research in service innovation and management.

CTF research also addresses pressing societal challenges. Studies of circular business models and reuse in retail show how companies can combine sustainability with competitiveness, while research on local food systems and sustainable consumption highlights the importance of collaboration across value chains. Initiatives in digital health and mobility explore how services can support well-being and sustainable everyday life.

Recent analysis by RISE and Circle Economy highlights the urgency of this work, showing that

Sweden lose nearly SEK 600 billion annually due to linear economic practices, as products and materials are discarded long before their functional value has been fully utilised. This underlines the need for circular solutions and service-based models that extend resource use.

Digitalisation and artificial intelligence represent another important theme. Research on AI-supported innovation and the implementation of the EU AI Act in public services highlights both opportunities and governance challenges as AI becomes increasingly integrated into society.

Through collaboration with organisations across industry and the public sector, as well as initiatives such as *Värdeskapande samtal* (Value-Creating Conversations), CTF continues to bridge research and practice.

Looking ahead, key questions remain: how can organisations accelerate circular transitions, how should AI be governed to support both efficiency and human well-being, and how can services strengthen resilience and trust in complex societies? With its interdisciplinary research environment and strong partnerships, CTF is well positioned to contribute.

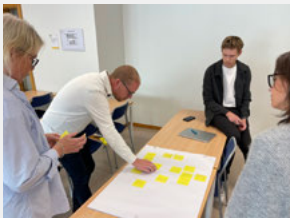
Malin Thorsén
CEO Bright Planet
Chair of CTF Advisory Board

Highlights 2025

Awards & academic recognition

- **Siri Jakobsson Støre** was awarded the Swedish National Committee for Psychological Sciences' prize for outstanding young researcher in Psychology 2025.
- **Ingo Karpen** was awarded an Education Award from the University of Valencia,
- **Bo Edvardsson** was ranked 175th globally in Business and Management by Research.com.

CTF's annual planning day – shaping the next chapter



Kundinnovationsdagen 2025

Robot-guided tourism, textile renovation concepts and the Ångsbacka course centre in Molkom were among the highlights showcased at Kundinnovationsdagen 2025. (Customer Innovation Day 2025) During the event, CTF also presented the Swedish Innovation Index 2024, based on customer evaluations of how innovative companies and public organisations are perceived to be.



QUIS19 gathered more than 275 participants in Rome in June. Originating at CTF and Karlstad University in 1988, QUIS has since grown into a leading global forum for research on service innovation and value creation.

DigitalWell Arena – entering phase three

DigitalWell Arena received funding for its third phase in 2025, enabling continued work on the large-scale implementation of digital health solutions in Värmland. CTF and Karlstad University remain key research partners, contributing to the initiative's interdisciplinary foundation and long-term development.



2 Major handbooks published

In 2025, two major academic handbooks were published, edited by CTF researchers in collaboration with international partners, providing guidance for future research and practice.



12

Episodes of Värdeskapande samtal

In 2025, the seminar series Värdeskapande samtal (Value-creating conversations), developed in collaboration with the Hamrin Foundation, concluded with its 12th and final episode.

4

New team members

CTF welcomed three new PhD students and one new researcher in 2025, strengthening expertise in service research, digital transformation and sustainable innovation.

3

New associate professors appointed

Alexandre Sukhov (Business Administration), Charlotte Bäckman (Psychology) and Maria Åkesson (Business Administration) were appointed associate professors at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Karlstad University.



Doctoral milestones

We celebrated three completed PhD theses and one licentiate thesis in Business Administration in 2025.



Jana Huck

PhD, Business Administration



Anne-Charlotte Paas

PhD, Business Administration



John-Erik Hassel

PhD, Business Administration



Muhammad Murtaza Ali

Licentiate, Business Administration

Organisation and research framework

CTF, Service Research Center, is a multidisciplinary research centre at Karlstad University in Sweden, established in 1986. Researchers, PhD students and visiting scholars from around the world work with partners in industry, the public sector and wider society to advance service research with practical impact.



CTF's researchers and PhD students are active across Business Administration, Psychology, Information Systems, Industrial Engineering and Management, Environmental and Energy Systems, Computer Science and Political Science. Daily operations are led by a director supported by three research advisers, an administrative team (administration, communications and finance) and a strategic council of professors and associate professors at CTF.

Advisory board (2025)

CTF's advisory board brings perspectives from private and public organisations and academia, providing external advice and insight.

- Chair: Malin Thorsén (Bright Planet AB)
- Kristina Heinonen (Hanken School of Economics)
- Anna Skårdin (Elvenite)
- Hans Karlsson (Arvika Municipality)
- Mikael af Kleen (Differ Strategy)
- Jonas Matthing (Compare)
- Peter Rovèr (Effect Management)
- From CTF: Per Kristensson, Carolina Camén, and Jenny Karlsson

Research framework and goals

CTF's research addresses societal challenges with the ambition to improve services that matter for people, organisations and the planet. We generate knowledge on how value is created through service, based on the needs of individuals, businesses, organisations and society. We study value-creating processes – the interactions and effects that arise between an organisation and a user, such as a customer, citizen or patient. Our core themes include service innovation, service management, service experience, transformative service research, service logic and service-system transformation. We expand into new areas as societal needs evolve. Our work is conducted in close collaboration with private and public organisations and with national and international academic partners. CTF holds a strong international position within service research, and many projects contribute directly to the UN Sustainable Development Goals in the 2030 Agenda by advancing sustainable solutions in practice.



2025 in brief

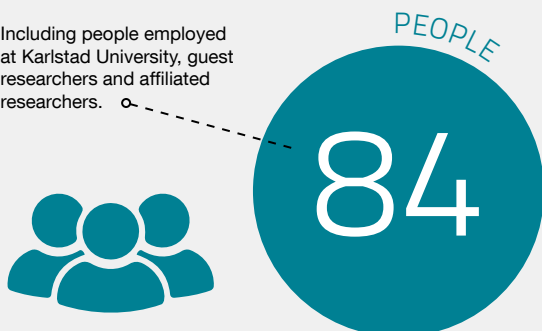


EXTERNAL PARTNERS
Across industry, public sector and funding agencies.



SEMINARS & CONFERENCES
were arranged and co-arranged in collaboration
with regional, national and international partners.

Including people employed
at Karlstad University, guest
researchers and affiliated
researchers.



INTERNATIONAL
ACADEMIC COLLABORATORS
across Europe, North America, Asia and Australia.

Meet our new researchers



Ellen Claesdotter Pettersson – Industrial PhD student in Psychology

Ellen studies resilient leadership and how leaders navigate change, pressure and uncertainty in complex organisations. Her research examines how learning occurs through adversity and how leaders build capacity for constructive action. With 20 years' experience as a licensed psychologist specialising in work and organisational psychology, she brings extensive practical insight from public sector leadership and development. She also works as an organisational psychologist in the City of Landskrona.



Jasper van Kuijk – Senior lecturer in Information Systems

Jasper focuses on user-centred design, digital information systems and how organisations create services that work effectively for people. His research connects design, technology and societal impact, with emphasis on sustainability and inclusion. At CTF, he contributes to the Re:Value project on circular transport solutions and supervises doctoral students in digital mobility and public service design. His background spans academia, applied design and science communication.



Felicia Öberg – PhD student in Industrial Engineering and Management

Felicia's research centres on AI-supported idea management and how digital tools can make early-stage innovation processes more inclusive and efficient. She examines how AI can foster creativity and reduce bias, with a strong interest in gender equality in innovation work. Her research aims to support fair and future-oriented innovation practices.



Neshe Tuna – PdD student in Information Systems

Neshe studies co-creation and community-driven innovation in settings where technology, policy and culture intersect. She explores how collaborative processes help innovations grow, spread and become sustainable. Her work focuses on socio-technical change and how people, organisations and technologies shape one another in periods of transformation.

International research collaborations

CTF collaborates with universities and research institutes worldwide. Our international environment includes visiting scholars, doctoral exchanges, and research visits by our own researchers; together, these activities contribute to joint publications, co-supervision, and long-term partnerships.

In 2025, visiting scholars and doctoral students from institutions such as the University of Tokyo, Delft University of Technology, Freie Universität Berlin, the University of Porto and Université du Québec à Montréal spent time at CTF, contributing to seminars, joint publications and doctoral education.

CTF researchers also undertook research visits and extended stays at partner universities across Europe, North America, Asia and Australia, including Politecnico di Milano, MINES Paris – PSL, the University of Adelaide, Roma Tre University, the University of Vaasa, the University of Porto, Vienna University of Economics and Business and Cork University Business School. These exchanges resulted in joint publications, new research applications and strengthened long-term collaboration.

CTF researchers also played active roles in national and Nordic academic networks and research schools, including the Swedish Institute

for Quality (SIQ), the Swedish Quality Management Academy (SQMA), The Swedish Research School of Management and IT (MIT), the Swedish Network for Advanced Business Studies (SNABS) and the Nordic Research School in Innovation and Entrepreneurship (NORSI), strengthening doctoral education, interdisciplinary research and knowledge exchange.

Visiting professors (2025)

Our visiting professors contribute to workshops, seminars, publications and doctoral engagement, strengthening CTF's work in several fields. The visiting professorships are funded by the Anne-Marie and Gustaf Ander Foundation for Media Research.

- Elina Jaakkola (University of Turku)
- Cristina Mele (University of Naples Federico II)
- Martin Schreier (University of Vienna)
- Pascal Le Masson (MINES Paris – PSL)

A selection of academic partners worldwide.



- **60+ External Partners** – across industry, public sector and funding agencies.
- **4 International Visiting Professors** – strengthening CTF's global research environment.
- **15+ International Research Visits** – reciprocal exchange with leading universities worldwide.
- **30+ International Academic Collaborators** – across Europe, North America, Asia and Australia.

Funders and partners

CTF work in partnerships with businesses, public organisations, academia, and funding bodies. In 2025, we collaborated with more than 60 external partners, including research councils, public agencies, municipalities, companies, and civil society organisations. In addition to support from Karlstad University, we are grateful for the support from our funders and partners.

- Anne-Marie and Gustaf Anders Foundation for Media Research
- CGI
- Compare
- County Administrative Board of Värmland
- Effect Management
- Elvenite
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- Formas
- Furhat Robotics
- Glava Energy Center
- Hagfors Municipality
- ICA Maxi Supermarket Bergvik
- IVL Swedish Environmental Research Institute
- Karlstad Energy
- Karlstad Municipality
- Löfbergs
- Nifa
- Nobina Sweden AB
- Paper Province
- Region Värmland
- RISE Research Institutes of Sweden
- Sahlgrenska Science Park
- Samhällsnytta AB
- SBAB
- Scaaler
- Strawberry Hotels
- Svensk Handel – Swedish Trade Federation
- Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR)
- The European Union's Interreg North Sea programme
- The Hamrin Foundation
- The Jan Wallander and Tom Hedelius Foundation and the Tore Browaldh Foundation
- The Knowledge Foundation (KK Foundation)
- The Research Council of Norway
- The Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences
- The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth
- The Swedish Consumer Agency
- The Swedish Energy Agency
- The Swedish Food Agency
- The Swedish Police Authority
- The Swedish Transport Administration
- Tietoevry
- Tobii
- Uddeholm AB
- Vinnova
- Visit Värmland
- Volvo Group
- VTI – Swedish National Road and Transport Research Institute
- And many others



MED FINANSIERING FRÅN



New funding and projects

In 2025, CTF received over SEK 14,5 million in new funding from Formas, Vinnova, Region Värmland, the Swedish Consumer Agency, and others. This enabled several new projects and research collaborations, some of which are described below.

Building healthy cities for the future

Researchers Siri Jagstedt and Johan Netz participate in Omställningslabb Karlstad – Utkant blir framkant. Using Tingvallastaden as a transition lab, the project develops and tests innovations to promote healthy living and citizen well-being. It focuses on efficient use of existing buildings, sustainable mobility, and systemic innovation. This five-year project is part of the national ShiftSweden programme and funded by Formas.

Co-create mode-choice: designing everyday mobility

The two-year project Samskapa resval, led by researcher Lars E. Olsson, brings together Karlstad and Hammarö municipalities, Region Värmland, schools, parents and children to co-create solutions for sustainable and equitable everyday travel. The project is funded by Vinnova.

Virtual currencies and consumer decision-making

Led by researcher Erik Wästlund and funded by the Swedish Consumer Agency, this project investigates how virtual currencies in digital games, such as Robux in Roblox, affect spending behaviour and consumer decision-making. The work supports national consumer protection and aligns with EU guidance.

AI regulation in European public services

The project Maskinen och/! myndigheten, led by researcher Petter Falk and funded by Vinnova, prepares a Horizon application for a comparative study of the EU AI Act's implementation in public sector organisations across six EU countries. The aim is to identify effective practices and support a harmonised application of the AI Act in European public services.

DigitalWell Arena: phase three

DigitalWell Arena, where around 60 researchers from several disciplines at Karlstad University collaborate to advance digital health innovation in Värmland, is entering its third phase (2026-2028). The project will continue to strengthen regional collaboration while expanding partnerships with national and international initiatives. The project is funded by Vinnova and Region Värmland.

Gennovation: strengthening Värmland-based companies through gender and inclusion

The four-year project, led by researcher Sara Davoudi, supports small and medium-sized enterprises in Värmland by integrating gender, equality, and inclusion into business development. Participating companies gain practical tools, tailored advice, and opportunities for co-creation with researchers and other stakeholders. The project aims to increase innovation capacity and long-term sustainability in the region. It is funded by the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket), Region Värmland, and Karlstad University.

Circular public transport

Researcher Carolina Camén is part of the four-year project Cirkulär kollektivtrafik (2025–2029), funded by the Swedish Energy Agency. The project explores how public transport in Sweden can become more circular, identifying opportunities for sustainable procurement, cost-efficient solutions, and new business models. Project partners include Linköping University, Karlstad University (CTF), Nobina, Keolis and K2.

Publications

Publishing research is one of the distinguishing factors for researchers. The publication process brings quality assurance to higher education.

In 2025, CTF researchers published 40 peer-reviewed journal articles, 23 of which were co-authored with international scholars. In addition, 43 conference papers, three books, 26 book chapters, and four reports were published.

Three PhD theses and one licentiate thesis were completed in 2025, including: Huck, J. (2025) Business Administration, "Idea Development for Innovation: A Multi-Level Exploration of the Activities and Processes Propelling Ideas Towards Innovation", Karlstad University Studies, 2025:32. Paas, A-C (2025) Business Administration, "Det är klart jag vill vara hållbar, men...: En kvalitativ studie om hållbar konsumtion och identitetskonstruktion", Karlstad University Studies, 2025:30. Hassel, J-E. (2025) Business Administration, "Venture Builders: Organizing Strategic Entrepreneurship Support", Karlstad University Studies, 2025:11. Licentiate: Ali, M. M. (2025) Business Administration, Framing Services, Capabilities, and Well-Being: Adopting the Choice Framework in Transformative Service Research, Karlstad University Studies 2025:27.

High-impact journal publications

Several CTF researchers published articles in high-impact journals, including *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Service Research*, *Journal of Service Management*, *Journal of Services Marketing*, *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Public Management Review*, *Journal of Product and Innovation Management*, *European Journal of Marketing*, among others.

Researchers also contributed to editorial assignments, peer-review work, and participation in professional boards.

The article by Andrey Abadzhiev, Alexandre Sukhov and Mikael Johnson, "Business model innovation for reducing uncertainty in sustainability transitions: A case study of the wood construction

industry", was selected as one of the top five papers of 2024, in *Creativity and Innovation Management*.

Major Handbooks

CTF researchers published two major academic volumes in collaboration with leading national and international partners. The Handbook of Service Experience, edited by Per Kristensson and Lars Witell together with Mohamed Zaki (Cambridge Service Alliance), brings together leading research on customer experience, service design, innovation and management in the digital era. The volume includes 27 chapters combining theoretical insights with empirical cases. Several CTF researchers contributed, offering new perspectives on servitization, digitalization and reuse, underscoring CTF's strong role in advancing international research on service experiences.

Service Innovation and Management, edited by Lars Witell, builds on 15 years of CTF research funded by the Knowledge Foundation, and is developed in close collaboration with companies such as Volvo, Kongsberg, IKEA, ICA Maxi and Swedish healthcare. The book provides accessible insights for both research and professional development, including themes such as service innovation, servitisation, platforms, circular economy and phygital services.

Awards and academic recognition

Several CTF researchers received recognition in 2025. Charlotte Bäckman, Alexandre Sukhov and Maria Åkesson were appointed associate professors. Siri Jakobsson Støre received the Swedish National Committee for Psychological Sciences' prize for outstanding young researcher in Psychology 2025. Ingo Karpen received an Education Award from the University of Valencia, and Bo Edvardsson was ranked 175th globally in Business and Management by Research.com.

Selected journal articles

Abadzhiev, A., Carlborg, P., & Sukhov, A. (2025). Towards High Circularity: Reconfiguring Firm-level Strategy. *British Journal of Management*. This article examines how companies can redesign strategic priorities to succeed in a circular economy. By analysing Swedish wood construction firms, the authors identify distinct strategic configurations that combine CE design, innovation, and organisational capabilities. Their findings offer a practical roadmap for managers aiming to implement high circularity approaches in business.

Danatzis, I., Hill, T., Karpen, I.O., & Kleinaltenkamp, M. (2025). Curating the crowd: how firms manage social fit to stage social atmospheres. *Journal of Marketing*. This study shows how companies can deliberately curate their audience — not just their physical service environment — to create powerful shared social experiences. Through fieldwork in Berlin clubs, the authors identify three key curation mechanisms that help firms bring together the right mix of people and shape memorable atmospheres, offering guidance for managers in hospitality, events, and other experience-based industries.

Kunz, W., Duque, L., Sanchez, L. S., Kristensson, P., & Sondergaard, H.S. (2025). Being Innovative as a Company in an Aging Society. *Journal of Service Management*. This article proposes a conceptual framework to understand the drivers of consumers' perceptions of firm

innovativeness in the context of an aging society, and discusses implications for innovation strategies that address both visible and behind-the-scenes factors influencing perceived innovativeness.

Löfberg, N., Åkesson, M., & Skålen, P. (2025). Realization and unrealisation of servitization through everyday micro-level activities: The interplay between servitization practices, practitioners, and praxis. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 124, 195-211. This research sheds light on the day-to-day activities through which manufacturing firms succeed — or fail — in expanding their service offerings. By identifying core practices and roles that shape servitization work, the authors provide a framework that helps both researchers and managers understand how service transformation unfolds at the micro level.

Olsson, L. E., & Friman, M. (2025). Self-reported dilemmas in choices of daily travel. *Journal of Transport and Sustainability*. This study provides novel insights into the psychological and value-driven aspects of choices in travel behavior. About half of the 2,000 Swedes surveyed said their choices involves real trade-offs, not just habitual behaviour. The findings highlight the complexity of travel-related decision-making and that people's basic values shape how they handle these dilemmas. The need for policies that address these dilemmas is emphasized.



Research collaborations and impact stories

Strengthening local food networks and systems in Värmland

The Värmlandsmat project, led by NIFA and CTF, has strengthened links between local food producers, consumers, and researchers. Through shop-in-shop solutions, workshops, and digital training, producers have gained new sales channels and practical insights, while researchers have been able to study market behaviour in everyday contexts. The project has promoted collaboration across the local food value chain and supported the development of more sustainable and innovative food systems.

A key component has been the creation of shop-in-shop solutions in the grocery sector – primarily through Coop Värmland – where small and medium-sized producers have been able to sell and test products directly in stores. This has given companies access to new sales channels, rapid customer feedback, and opportunities to experiment with their product ranges.

For the researchers, these environments have enabled studies based on observations and interviews in real-life settings.

“Shop in Shop has provided a concrete way to bring theory and practice together and to create genuine market encounters for producers,” says project coordinator Johan Johansson at NIFA.

Helén Williams, associate professor of Environmental and Energy Systems at CTF, continues:

“NIFA and CTF have built a productive collaboration that supports actors across the food value chain in the NIFA cluster. Trust and understanding of each other’s needs have been essential in generating insights and value for all participants.”

Companies have gained access to research knowledge through site visits, seminars, workshops, and a digital training package focusing on sustainable development, the circular economy, food system transitions, reduced food waste, and materials on services and servitization.

“The researchers bring different disciplines and perspectives, which has strengthened the potential



Helén Williams, associate professor at CTF.



Johan Johansson, coordinator at NIFA.

for innovative and interdisciplinary approaches,” says Helén Williams.

One lesson from the work is that local food can be marketed successfully as a way for consumers to feel more grounded.

A subproject has also examined how public-sector actors can both procure more local food and better manage raw materials to reduce food waste. At three upper secondary schools in Karlstad Municipality, several methods such as participatory observation, interviews, and workshops were used to understand their processes and explore interventions.

“We have gained several highly valuable insights,” says Helén Williams. “Perhaps the most important concerns how their care for the food, the students,

each other, the local community, and the planet shapes their daily activities. A clear intention in their work is to encourage more young people to come to the school cafeteria and eat nutritious meals rather than going to fast-food restaurants. Their view is that if young people come and eat, they learn better.”

The project is funded by The European Regional Development Fund (May 1 2023–30 April 2026) and is part of Akademin för smart specialisering, a strategic partnership between Karlstad University and Region Värmland.



Medfinansieras av
Europeiska unionen

Industry Days: a CTF and CSA initiative

In November 2025, CTF and the Cambridge Service Alliance (CSA), the University of Cambridge, hosted Industry Days at Karlstad University, gathering researchers and industry partners to explore how AI is shaping the future of sustainable digital services.

Participants from CTF, CSA, Linköping University, Volvo, AstraZeneca, HCLTech, Aixtron, and Husqvarna met over two days to discuss how AI is driving service development and creating new value.

“CTF and CSA share many common interests, for instance the transformation the manufacturing industry is experiencing,” says Per Kristensson, professor of Psychology and director of CTF.

“This collaboration has grown into partner exchanges, joint research projects, and co-authored publications.”

The partnership began in 2018 with the first Industry Day held at the University of Cambridge and has since developed into a long-term platform for international research collaboration.

“Next year, the University of Cambridge will host QUIS 20, an international research conference originally established by CTF in 1990,” says Mohamed Zaki, professor and director of CSA.

“Industry Days demonstrate Karlstad University’s growing role as a global partner in next-generation sustainable services, laying the foundation for new collaborations and strengthening our international network,” adds Per Kristensson.



Value-Creating Conversations: Strengthening dialogue between research and society

How can reuse be both profitable and sustainable? What role might social robots play in future services and welfare systems? And how do we address challenges in working life, health, digitalisation and the climate transition? These questions are at the heart of the seminar series *Värdeskapande samtal* (Value-Creating Conversations), created in collaboration with The Hamrin Foundation.



Recording of Episode 11 with Peter Rovér, Effect Management, and Alexandre Sukhov, CTF. The moderator was journalist Annika Lindqvist.

“Research creates real value only when it benefits society. Through *Värdeskapande samtal*, we share research-based knowledge beyond academia while also gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges faced in practice. It is a fantastic combination where research takes its place where it is needed most,” says Per Kristensson, professor of Psychology and director of CTF.

The seminar series has offered a new way of strengthening dialogue between academia, industry

and the public sector, providing fresh perspectives on how current issues and complex societal challenges can be addressed.

Over the course of the series, researchers and practitioners met in twelve recorded conversations, all of which are available to watch. The discussions explored topics such as reuse in retail, idea management and working life, social robots and welfare technology, sustainable food systems, behavioural change, urban electrification, sustainable consumption solutions, data-driven service innovation, digitalisation, innovation and servitisation.

The twelve-episode seminar series has strengthened CTF’s role as a bridge between research and society, contributing to knowledge dissemination, new partnerships and practical innovation.

Watch all episodes



We are extremely pleased with this research collaboration. Building bridges between scientific research and those who will apply it is part of the Hamrin Foundation’s mission.

Hanna Ståhl, CEO, The Hamrin Foundation



Hanna Ståhl

Reuse in Retail: shaping the circular future

In the research project AGAIN – Reuse in Retail, CTF researchers, retail actors, public organisations, and consumers explored how pre-loved products can be integrated into retail offerings to create value for both customers and businesses.



“Retail is undergoing a shift where reuse is moving from a peripheral element to a central part of the business model. Our research shows it can be both attractive and profitable when designed with the customer in focus,” says Jenny Karlsson, PhD in Business Administration at CTF.

A key finding is that customer experience drives willingness to choose pre-loved products. Price matters, but so do design, credibility, trust, and clarity. Customers want to understand what they are buying and why it is a good choice.

“It should be easy to choose reuse. Clear, inspiring, and trustworthy offers increase both interest and sales,” adds Jenny Karlsson.

The project analysed three business models for reuse: integration into traditional retail, circular retail concepts, and rental models. While there

is no universal solution, shared success factors include clear offers, simple purchasing experiences, transparent quality and pricing, and well-chosen communication channels.

The AGAIN: Reuse in Retail project was funded by the Swedish Retail and Wholesale Council during 2023–2025.

5 recommendations for the retail sector:

- **Make reuse visible** – easy to find and understand.
- **Build trust** – be transparent about quality, history, and value.
- **Enhance the experience** – create inspiring, curated environments.
- **Test and learn** – use pop-ups, events, and experiments to refine offers.
- **Collaborate** – build networks, share resources, and strengthen competence, visibility, and profitability.

Read the final report for Again



AGAIN created valuable dialogue, new insights, and concrete solutions for reuse in retail. I gained customer insights and ideas about reuse and the circular economy that I have been able to apply in practice to inspire our tenants.

Ann-Sophie Redfern, Centre Manager, Mitt i City, Karlstad



Ann-Sophie Redfern

Co-creating future pathways for Hagfors

Bruksort 2.0 brought together Hagfors Municipality, local businesses, residents, and researchers to co-create visions for strengthening attractiveness, mobility and innovation in the town.



Photo: Compare.

The project examined how small industrial towns can strengthen their development through co-creation, using residents' stories and perspectives as the basis for shared visions and future scenarios.

The project resulted in the Hagfors Model, highlights the town's strengths and showing how narratives, trust, and creativity can support sustainable development. Residents contributed through co-created poems, sculptures, and future narratives, offering their interpretations of societal transitions.

CTF researchers contributed expertise in service design, co-creation and sustainable societal development, focusing on how residents, industry and public actors jointly identify needs, challenges and hopes to inform long-term strategies.

"The future does not simply 'arrive'. It is shaped through collective choices, priorities, and practices. In Hagfors, residents, the municipality, industry, and civil society co-created future scenarios illustrating

how mobility, work, culture, and everyday life can be developed together," says Jenny Karlsson, PhD in Business Administration at CTF.

A key insight was the importance of physical meeting places that enable engagement, collaboration, creativity and interaction across generations – serving as vital complements to digital forums and as key components in enabling participation and long-term community development. The project also showed how perceptions of rurality influence people's self-image, and how culture and local engagement can strengthen both belonging and capacity for action. This work represents the first step in a broader process exploring how industrial towns' social, cultural and creative resources can contribute to sustainable development.

Bruksort 2.0 was carried out in 2024–2025 in collaboration with Hagfors Municipality, Uddeholm AB, Compare, Visit Värmland, and Xperience Next at Lindholmen Science Park. CTF's contribution was funded through these partnerships and forms part of broader research on sustainable societal development.

Final report for the Bruksort 2.0 project



“Bruksort 2.0 has made it clear that culture and local engagement are central to creating a sustainable and attractive place. When people articulate their vision of the future, both identity and capacity for action are strengthened.

Pernilla Bredberg, Business Developer, Visit Värmland



Pernilla Bredberg

Driving change in Swedish agriculture through collaborative governance

Samhällsnytta provides a neutral arena where research from CTF is translated into practical tools for tackling complex societal challenges. One example is the project HelhetsEnkelt, where researchers contribute expertise in service research and system design to simplify the regulatory landscape for Swedish farmers.

HelhetsEnkelt is a development project within Samhällsnytta carried out in close collaboration with farmers, public authorities, and industry organisations. The project aims to reduce the extensive regulatory burden that farmers have long experienced as both time consuming and costly.

Swedish farmers are allegedly expected to comply with approximately 860 regulations and may face up to six official inspections per year, in addition to recurrent industry controls.

“We examine how the complexity of regulatory frameworks affects sustainable food production and identify potential measures that can ease the burden for both farmers and authorities—without compromising food safety, animal welfare, or

environmental objectives,” says Martin Fransson researcher at Samhällsnytta and CTF.

The project applies system design – grounded in research from CTF – as a method for analysing and developing solutions that reduce the perceived regulatory burden. A central strength of the project is its ability to bring together key stakeholders and establish shared working processes. This collaborative approach enables structured learning across organisational boundaries and supports new forms of governance to address complex societal challenges.

HelhetsEnkelt is conducted within the framework of the SustainGov innovation programme with funding from Vinnova, Formas, and the Swedish



Johan Quist, CEO, Samhällsnytta.

Energy Agency, contributing to the programme's focus on future proof food supply for health and well being.

The project builds on a national food system facing significant challenges, including low self sufficiency, vulnerability to climate change, and the public health consequences of unhealthy dietary patterns. These challenges are compounded by fragmented governance and goal conflicts, making the need for coordinated solutions even more urgent.

“It is difficult to address shared challenges from within a single organisation. This is why a neutral meeting place – like Samhällsnytta – is needed. In an open and exploratory environment, existing norms and structures can be challenged. With a pioneering spirit, learning becomes an integral part of doing things together.” Says Johan Quist, CEO of Samhällsnytta AB.

HelhetsEnkel is carried out in collaboration with the National Veterinary Agency, the Federation of Swedish Farmers, the Swedish Food Agency, the Swedish Board of Agriculture, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, the County Administrative Boards of Jämtland, Värmland and Skåne, the Stockholm School of Economics, Växa Sverige, the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry, and individual farmers.

Learn more about
Samhällsnytta



About Samhällsnytta

Samhällsnytta AB is a national meeting arena where actors from different parts of society can explore new ways of working together to address today's societal challenges. Its methods draw on research from CTF at Karlstad University and on design-driven transformation experience from Experio Lab within Region Värmland. Samhällsnytta is a subsidiary of Karlstad University Holding AB, a company owned by Karlstad University, and operates without profit requirements as part of the university's efforts to make research results accessible and useful to society.

Communication and outreach

Research communication and outreach are central to CTF's mission. In 2025, CTF researchers shared insights through seminars, conferences, public events, media engagement, and digital formats – strengthening connections between research, practice, and society.

Productions and events

CTF produced four new episodes of the seminar series *Värdeskapande samtal* in collaboration with the Hamrin Foundation, and launched the podcast *Tjänstepodden*. The 8th edition of CTF's Kundinnovationsdagen (Customer Innovation day, formerly Service Innovation Day) was arranged within *Unfold 2025 Värmland*, a regional collaboration including Compare, DigitalWell Arena, DigitalWell Ventures, Region Värmland, Karlstad Municipality, and CTF. Researchers also presented at public events, including *Kvalitetsmässan*.

Research conferences

CTF organised and contributed to major national and international events, including *QUIS19* (Italy), *Industry Days* in collaboration (with Cambridge Service Alliance), the 4th *Nordic PRME Symposium*, *Sustainability Day* (with Karlstad Business School), 14th *Swedish Transportation Research Conference* (Linköping University), *A Sustainable Tomorrow* (with Bright Planet), and *Service Operations Management Forum* (Denmark). Researchers also presented at over ten international conferences across Europe, North America, and Africa facilitating knowledge exchange across multiple research communities.

Internal seminars

CTF's internal seminar series supported exchange among researchers and doctoral students. Topics included service innovation, the platform economy, sustainability, and technology in service development. Guest lectures featured international scholars such as Soumaya Ben Letaifa (Université du Québec à Montréal), Cristina Mele (University of Naples Federico II), Pascal Le Masson (Mines Paris Tech) and Kentaro Watanabe (University of Tsukuba).

Media engagement

CTF researchers were featured in media, including *Sveriges Radio*, *TV4*, *SVT*, *Dagens Nyheter*, *Göteborgs-Posten*, *Värmlands Folkblad*, *Nya Wermlands-tidningen*, *Nerikes Allehanda*, and digital platforms such as *Bulletin*, *Omni*, and *MSN Sverige*. Research was also communicated through podcasts, international media outlets, specialist publications and *Karlstad University's* magazine *Forskningsmagasinet*, covering topics ranging from sustainable consumption and welfare services to digitalisation, climate impact and technological developments in service industries.

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Education

CTF researchers play an active role in education at Karlstad University, spanning undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels. Their engagement contributes to high-quality teaching, supervision, and academic leadership across several disciplines.

Graduate education

CTF researchers and doctoral students contribute broadly to education across Karlstad University, with the strongest presence at Karlstad Business School, where they are deeply involved in teaching, supervision, and leadership within Business Administration. Researchers also teach and supervise in Psychology, Information Systems, Environmental and Energy Systems, Industrial Management Engineering, and Political Science, reflecting CTF's interdisciplinary reach.

In 2025, researchers were engaged in course development, programme leadership, academic governance, and supervision at undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels. Several researchers held key academic leadership roles, including Deputy Head of Department, Head of Discipline, and Director of Studies. They contributed to multiple master's programmes. A total of 101 master's theses in Business Administration and Industrial Engineering and Management were linked to CTF research.

Doctoral education

In 2025, 25 PhD students were affiliated with CTF, representing Business Administration, Psychology, Industrial Engineering and Management, Computer Science, and Information Systems. Six students were active within The Swedish Research School of Management and IT (MIT).

Doctoral milestones during the year, included completed PhD theses by John-Erik Hassel, Anne-Charlotte Paas, and Jana Huck, and a completed licentiate thesis by Muhammad Murtaza Ali. Mid-seminars were held by Pritam Padhi and Jonas Hjalmar Blom, and Kristin Caravelli-Svärd completed her final seminar.

CTF also hosted doctoral courses in Business Administration, with lectures delivered by CTF researchers. CTF researchers also contributed to PhD courses within SNABS, a Swedish network for doctoral research in business, accounting, and sustainability.

Professional development

CTF researchers contributed to professional development initiatives, particularly within ISE, and through commissioned education via Karlstad University's Uppdrags AB. During 2025 the ISE project was concluded. These activities strengthened the link between research, education, and industry needs.

2025 at a glance

- 25 PhD students affiliated with CTF
- 3 PhD theses defended
- 1 Licentiate thesis completed
- 101 master's theses linked to CTF research
- Teaching across six disciplines
- Academic leadership roles in multiple programmes and departments
- Engagement in doctoral courses, research schools, and professional development
- Successful completion of the Graduate professional development programme ISE

ISE: Co-creating advanced courses for professionals strengthened lifelong learning

After five years, 21 courses and more than 500 participants, the ISE project has reached its conclusion. The results demonstrate how co-created, research-based, education can strengthen lifelong learning and deepen collaboration between academia and industry.



Carolina Camén, PhD in Business Administration.

Researchers and teachers from five academic disciplines, supported by administrative and technical staff across the university, designed and delivered 21 flexible research-based courses for working professionals in manufacturing and service industries. The courses focused on strengthening competencies in service development, service design, service innovation, digitalisation and organisational change, and broadened access to research-based competence development.

“ISE was a fantastic team effort, bringing together 46 teachers and researchers from five academic disciplines, together with administrative and technical staff across the university. This close collaboration with industry partners expanded competence development across sectors and broadened CTF’s outreach,” says programme manager Carolina Camén, PhD in Business Administration at CTF.

A core strength of ISE was its flexible course design, allowing participants to combine work and

study. Courses provided 24/7 access to materials and blended online self-study with seminars and workshops.

“This created a strong link between academia and practice, enabling participants to apply research directly within their organisations,” says Carolina Camén.

Insights from course participants, teachers and researchers highlight several important effects of ISE. Through the courses, participants gained structure, tools, and new approaches to for example innovation, sustainability, and digitalisation, and in many cases this translated into concrete changes in how companies developed customer offerings, worked strategically, and collaborated with other actors. Because of the close interaction between academia and practice, participants were able to implement new knowledge directly in their day-to-day work and within their own organisations.

ISE also strengthened collaboration between industry and academia by co-creating learning environments where knowledge was developed jointly. For researchers at CTF, the programme reinforced the strong tradition of working closely with practice and provided new ways of sharing research through flexible, tailored courses based on participants’ real-world challenges. This approach enabled research results to be rapidly translated into practical use.

The Graduate professional development program ISE – Improving value creation through service education – was funded by the Knowledge Foundation from 2020 to 2025, as a central part of Karlstad University’s lifelong learning initiatives.

Tjänstepodden – a podcast making research accessible

In March 2025, CTF launched Tjänstepodden (The Service Podcast) as part of the ISE project to make research more accessible to professionals. The podcast, produced and hosted by CTF researchers Jenny Karlsson and Maria Åkesson, released weekly episodes over a ten-week period.

The podcast explored how organisations can create better customer experiences and more sustainable business models, combining research-based insights with practical discussions on service design, digital transformation, business innovation and servitization. Themes included what defines a service, how digitalisation and behavioural shifts influence service development, and how organisations can effectively manage challenging customer situations.

It provided space for reflection and dialogue in a more relaxed format than reports or academic articles. For example, in the episode on sustainable transformation, the conversation ranged from individual choices to corporate strategies and political decisions—helping listeners understand how different levels of society interact in sustainability efforts.

Tjänstepodden reached professionals interested in service development who do not typically engage with academic publications. It offered accessible insights into how CTF’s research connects to real organisational challenges and practices, and how different parts of society interact in shaping services and sustainability.



In the studio with; Jenny Karlsson, Maria Åkesson, Per Kristensson, Pernille K Andersson, John Johansson and Linda Bergkvist.

[Link to all episodes](#)



ISE in numbers

- **537** participants completed **21** courses
- **106** organisations and **133** companies involved
- **158** course videos produced
- **10** podcast episodes produced



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