



## The health and welfare of ageing populations in Sweden and India 2022

### Call for proposals for Indo-Swedish research on ageing and health

Forte and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) invite proposals for collaborative research projects in the field of ageing and health. A Memorandum of Intent (MoI) between ICMR and Forte for cooperation in the field of ageing research and health was signed in June 2015. This call is open for joint proposals from research teams based in India and Sweden.

### Background of the call

The proportion of older people in Sweden, India and many other countries is increasing. India being the second most populous country in the world has a large population of older people and the proportion is expected to increase further. This development is leading to significant challenges for elderly health care services, as more people are expected to live longer with illness and disability. Health care and issues of older people have been highlighted by The United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030), which aims at providing age friendly environments and integrated long-term care. In this context ICMR and Forte will fund research on initiatives that support active and healthy ageing.

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the gaps in policies, systems and services for older people in India and Sweden. In Sweden, weaknesses in the care system have been exposed with a significant proportion of Covid-19 related deaths being registered in care homes. The pandemic has illustrated the fragmentation of the Swedish elderly care system and lack of a clear division of mandate and responsibility between the state, regions, municipalities and care delivery actors. In India most of the elderly care is home-based, given by spouses, children and relatives. Proper Nutrition and lifestyle factors have an important role to play in healthy and active ageing. Both under nutrition and obesity in the presence of common cardio metabolic diseases like diabetes and hypertension, increase morbidity and reduce life expectancy. Covid-19 pandemic has also affected the mental health of older people in many ways such as loneliness, depression and delay in seeking medical treatment due to lockdown and fear of getting infected while visiting the hospitals.

The situation for care givers of aged people is relevant in Sweden and India. Despite a publicly funded aged care system in Sweden, relatives are often heavily involved in care. Many are cared for by their spouses and/or children. Much of the care has been shifted from care home facilities to home based care. The status of employed care givers in care homes is often low and working conditions are pressured. Caregiver fatigue, stress and their prevention are major issues for both countries that need to be addressed. In Sweden, international migration has led to increasing population heterogeneity. Migrants often experience differing life-course trajectories than the indigenous population, depending on

factors such as reason for migration, age of arrival and socio-economic factors. Public health initiatives need to take this into account. Ageing migrant groups may have varying needs and requirements and the provision of care for aged migrant people need to be tailored accordingly.

Harnessing technologies for elderly care is an important development in India and Sweden. Designing value based personalized and specialized care for the elderly based on their comorbidities and specific requirements are a priority. Technologies may be aimed at visual assistance, mobility assistance and cognitive assistance of older people. Barriers and strategies for older adults' acceptance of technology and perceptions of learning how to use new tools are important to identify.

## **Objectives and remit**

The call will stimulate interdisciplinary and innovative research in the field of ageing and health. Proposals may address the following themes:

### **Theme A - Public health, prevention, and health promotion**

Proposals could include research that can contribute to the promotion of active and healthy ageing along the life course:

#### *Subthemes:*

- Lifestyle factors, for example undernutrition and overnutrition.
- Early detection, prevention, and treatment of mental health problems
- Impact of Covid-19 restrictions on health issues of older people including delay in receiving timely medical care.
- Interventions aimed at the prevention of functional impairment as well as health promotion.

### **Theme B - Organisation and provision of care for older people**

Proposals could include research on how care for older adults should be designed, so that older people in different phases of life and with varying care requirements can maintain independence and control over their lives:

#### *Subthemes:*

- New and effective interventions in elderly care focusing on technologies including the use of assistive devices, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and eHealth.
- Organization and management of care focusing on integrated care and home-based care services.
- Housing types, inequality in living conditions among different groups and welfare technology.
- Issues of caregivers like caregiver fatigue, prevention, and time & financial implications for family members.

The subthemes are the preferred areas of research collaboration. Other innovative/readily translatable proposals within the above mentioned two broad areas that are relevant to both countries will also be considered. Proposals should demonstrate potential benefits to Sweden and India. The call will deliver significant 2-3-year research funding for internationally competitive and innovative projects.

## **Eligibility**

Proposals must demonstrate collaboration and usefulness for both the countries and include one Swedish and one Indian Principal Investigators. The Swedish Principal Investigator must submit an application to Forte and the Indian Principal Investigator must submit an application to ICMR.

### **Indian Principal Investigators**

Indian applicants must be working in a permanent position (with at least three years of service remaining) in a Medical College, Research Institute or University, anywhere in the country including Government, Semi-Government and Registered bodies. Applications from non-governmental agencies and private organizations should provide documentary evidence of registration and certificate for research with the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), Govt. of India, previous track record.

### **Swedish Principal Investigators**

The Swedish Principal Investigators should hold a doctoral degree at the start of the project and be affiliated to a Swedish University or Higher Education Institute (HEI) or at another research organization that has been approved as an administrative organization by Forte and has an organizational account in the Swedish application system Prisma.

## **How to apply**

This Call for Proposals is a one stage full application process. Applications should be submitted by each Principal Investigator via their respective funders' submission system before the deadline. The application systems have varied requirements; please find more information at the respective funding organisation's webpage. However, the principal investigators must submit identical information as far as possible since the applications will also be evaluated by a joint Indo-Swedish committee at the final phase of the evaluation process. The onus is on the applicant to find their own research collaborator(s) in the partner country. Only a common/joint proposal will be considered and the title of the applications must be the same.

### **Indian Principal Investigators**

The Indian Principal Investigators should submit their applications as per the ICMR format structured as below:

- Title of the Research Project (must be the same as the Swedish application)
- Summary (up to 250 words)
- Keywords
- Abbreviations

- Background (up to 500 words)
- Literature review (up to 1000 words)
- Novelty/Innovation (up to 250 words)
- Study objectives
- Methodology (up to 2000 words)
  - Study Design
  - Sample Size
  - Project Implementation Plan
  - Ethics Review
  - Data collection & statistical analysis plan
- Expected Outcomes (up to 100 words)
- Limitations of this study (up to 100 words)
- Future plans based on expected outcomes if any (up to 100 words)
- Timelines
- Institutional Support
- Budget - The budget would be sanctioned under broad sub-head as under (i) Staff (ii) Contingency (iii) Travel (if approved) (iv) Equipment (if approved) (v) Overhead charges (not more than 3% of staff and contingency)
- Added value of the transnational collaboration (max 250 words)
- CV of principal investigator in Sweden

[For more details on the format of the research plan please read ICMR's instructions »](#)

### **Swedish Principal Investigators**

The applications will be assessed by a review panel consisting of international researchers and Swedish representatives of the public with knowledge of Swedish conditions. Since applications are reviewed by international experts, your application should be written in English. If the application is submitted in Swedish, the quality of the assessment may be compromised. Forte is not responsible for the quality of any translations.

The Swedish Principal Investigators may submit their applications as per the format below:

- Title of the Research Project (must be the same as the Indian application)
- Abstract (max 2 000 characters)
- Purpose, research questions, theories, background and the originality of the project (max 20 000 characters)
- Study design, methods for data collection and analysis (max 20 000 characters)
- Work plan (max 15 000 characters)
- Relevance in relation to societal needs and Forte's areas of responsibility (max 2 500 characters)
- Engagement with end users (max 2 500 characters)
- Utilisation and communication of research results (max 2 500 characters)
- Is a sex or gender perspective applicable for your project? Explain your answer (max 2 500 characters)
- Interdisciplinary and/or multidisciplinary approach (max 2 500 characters)

- Ethical considerations (max 2 000 characters)
- Added value of the transnational collaboration (max 2000 characters)
- References for the application (max 7 000 characters)
- Budget
- Participating researchers
- CV
- Publications
- CV of principal investigator in India

### **The Indian application procedure**

All Indian applications are to be submitted via the [ICMR Electronics Project Management System \(e-PMS\)](#).

1. Open the ICMR Electronics [Project Management System \(e-PMS\) portal](#)
2. Project proposal submission is a three-step process in e-PMS:
  - I. Step 1: PI Registration/Login
  - II. Step 2: Verify Email Id and Complete/Update PI Profile
  - III. Step 3: Apply for Grant through submission of Ad-hoc proposal. Click on Proposal Submission > Submit New Proposal > Select Program > Choose ICMR Adhoc Project Program > click to proceed button and application form will be opened. In form point no. 9a (Is this proposal against any advertisement?) select Advertisement (Call for proposals for Indo-Swedish research on ageing and health).

### **The Swedish application procedure**

All Swedish applications are to be submitted via the [Prisma application and review system](#). Before writing the application, make sure the following conditions are met:

- You have created a personal account in Prisma
- All participating researchers of the Swedish part of the project have created personal accounts in Prisma
- Each participating researcher has stored personal data, CV and publications on their accounts
- Your administrating organisation has an organisational account in Prisma and has been approved as an administrating organisation at Forte. Read more about [Forte's criteria for administrating organisations](#) »

In order for your application to be considered, the final reporting for any previously approved projects must have been submitted. This only applies to grants where the deadline for final reporting has passed. Any previously granted extensions of project duration, and consequently of reporting deadlines, will be taken into account.

For more information on how to fill out the application, see instructions [on the call's website](#).

## **Funding available and timeframe**

Each selected project will be funded for a maximum period of three (3) years. To facilitate the objectives of the joint project, labour costs, consumables, research expenses, project related visits of India and Swedish researchers to the counterpart country may be supported. Each proposal must have an Indian and a Swedish PI. Each joint proposal must include separate budget requests from both India-based and Sweden-based Principal Investigators from their respective funder.

Expenditure by the project team in their country would be provided by the respective funding agency, i.e., Forte in Sweden will support expenditure on Swedish side of the project whereas the ICMR will support expenditure on the India side. While the exact nature of expenditure is not fixed, the following may NOT be funded from this allocation: purchase or construction of a building, rental costs for space that is owned by the institution, recruitment costs for staff, and purchase of office furniture. Institutional overhead will be determined in accordance with specific research and development programme related policies of each institution/government.

Forte and ICMR encourage participation of research students working under the project. Exchange visits of researchers between the two countries may be built within the joint collaborative project. Due to the nature of funding availability, projects funded through this scheme will be expected to be completed within the timeframe of October 2022-October 2025 and this will be a condition of an award. The Swedish budget breakdown must be completed in the Prisma system (as part of the application) and the India budget must be completed in the ICMR electronic project management system (ePMS) (as part of the application).

## **Indian Budget**

ICMR will fund the Indian component as per the usual ICMR terms and conditions. ICMR will provide funding to Indian researchers working in India only for research based in India. Based on the justification, approximately Indian rupees 1.5 crores may be available per project for its entire duration, not exceeding three years for the ICMR-funded portion of the costs. This funding is the maximum level and the amounts being applied for do not have to be of comparable size in the two countries.

## **Swedish Budget**

Forte will award funding to the institution of the Swedish Principal Investigator under the Forte's standard terms and conditions. A Maximum of SEK 5 million for three-year projects and SEK 3 million for two-year projects will be available per project for its duration, not exceeding three years for the Forte funded portion of the costs. Please note that the grant limit is including indirect costs (OH). This funding is the maximum level and the amounts being applied for do not have to be of comparable size in the two countries.

## **Evaluation**

ICMR and Forte will carry out independent assessment processes, arranging for applications to be reviewed by their respective expert scientific panels. Subsequently, this

expert advice will inform joint funding decisions. Full applications will be assessed and scored by both funding partners using jointly agreed scientific and funding criteria. In addition to maintaining the usual high standard of assessment of scientific excellence, reviewers will take into consideration collaborative and transnational potential.

**Indian Applicants**

ICMR will use a standard peer review assessment process. As per ICMR mechanism, Indian Investigators may be invited for presentation if required. The selected projects will also require Health Ministry's Screening Committee (HMSC) approval the process for which will be explained to PIs once selected.

**Swedish Applicants**

The applications are assessed by Forte's review panels. Funding decisions are made by Forte's board.

**Joint decision**

After the independent review process by the ICMR and Forte's review panels, a joint decision meeting will be held by ICMR and Forte for the final evaluation & shortlisting of joint proposals.

**Assessment criteria**

- Scientific quality
- Relevance
- Feasibility
- Added value of the transnational collaboration

**Terms and conditions**

Grant award recipients will have all project costs met by their country's respective funding agency, as specified in their submitted research proposal budgets. Researchers must therefore abide by the terms and conditions set out by their home country's research funder. Shortlisted proposals on the Indian side will be required to obtain HMSC approval before the grant can be released. [See the guidelines for international collaboration & HMSC procedures »](#)

**Deadlines and time plan**

The deadline for submission will be April 7 (17:00 IST; 13:30 CEST). ICMR and Forte will carry out an application matching process. Matched proposals must be received from partnering researchers in both countries by the deadline for an application to be eligible.

**Time plan**

**The call opens:** 25 January 2022 (17:00 IST / 13:30 CET)

**The call closes:** 7 April 2022 (17:00 IST / 13:30 CEST)

**Expected date for Forte's funding decision:** September 2022

**Expected project start:** 1 October 2022

**Contact and guidance**

All enquiries from Indian applicants should be directed to:

**ICMR**

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