

Stress related mental health problems focusing on rehabilitation, collaboration and a sustainable working life 2023

Information about the call

This call will contribute to increased knowledge within rehabilitation, collaboration and a sustainable working life. The total sum allocated is SEK 50 million for the years 2024–2026 (project start 1 December, 2023). The closing date for submissions is 8 June at 14:00 CEST.

Information about the call, application forms and instructions for the application are available in English, however in the case of ambiguities in the translation, the Swedish versions have precedence.

Table of contents

Background.....	2
Focus areas	2
Measures that provide support during the social insurance process.....	2
Collaboration between health and care providers.....	3
Important starting points	3
Grant type – project grant	4
Main applicant and participating researchers.....	4
Restrictions.....	4
Reasons for early refusal and rejection.....	4
The application process	5
The review process	5
Application requirements.....	6
Assessment criteria	6
Guiding questions	7
Collaboration between research and society	8
International research collaboration	8
Open Access.....	9
SweCRIS	9
Schedule.....	9
Support	9

Background

Forte has been commissioned by the Swedish Government to conduct a ten-year national research programme on mental health. The work is guided by a strategic research agenda where stress-related mental health problems and high levels of sick leave are emphasized as priority areas. One of the research programme's general goals is to encourage an active dialog and collaboration between practitioners, users and policymakers so that research results reach the relevant target groups and that this field of research develops and is strengthened. Fortes ambition is that the research programme will create the prerequisites for multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral collaboration.

The Swedish Social Insurance Agency will support research within the area of social security. Research-based knowledge is needed to support and develop the social security system so that it can live up to political goals, provide security and an adequate level of support to individuals over time, and contribute to a stronger society. The Swedish Social Insurance Agency is now strengthening its research activities by, for example, closer collaboration with external research funders. The area of mental health problems has a high priority within this work over the coming years.

Based on this, Forte is opening a call regarding stress related mental health problems focusing on rehabilitation, collaboration and a sustainable working life, in collaboration with the Swedish Social Insurance Agency. The aim with the call is that research will lead to a development of knowledge within the interaction between research, practical application and policy.

Focus areas

This call has two focus areas:

- Research regarding measures that provide support for people during the social insurance process and that contribute to a sustainable return to work or help prevent longer periods of sick leave related to mental health problems.
- Research that highlights collaboration between welfare providers connected to social insurance and mental health problems.

Measures that provide support during the social insurance process

Work within this area is related to target area 3 in the national public health policy, and being able to participate in working life can be an important health promoting factor for people suffering from mental health problems. Therefore, both an entrance into the labour market as well as a retained working capacity are vital, especially for young people suffering from mental health problems. Sick leave due to mental health problems has increased over the past decades. Mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, stress and psychological burnout are now the most common reasons for sick leave in Sweden. On top of this, the length of sick leave for these conditions has increased over time. This is in contrast to sick leave due to psychiatric illnesses, such as schizophrenia or psychoses, which represent a small and stable part of the total sick leave. Women are

strongly over-represented amongst those with longer periods of sick leave connected to stress-related mental health problems, especially within professions and organisations with significant levels of sick leave such as health care, teaching and social care.

The increased proportion of people in sickness insurance due to mental health problems shows that there is a need for innovative and effective measures that can help people return to a sustainable working life and also help prevent longer periods of sick leave due to mental health problems. There is a need of research that highlights the obstacles and possibilities connected to measures designed to support people during the sickness insurance process and that contribute to a sustainable return to work.

Collaboration between health and care providers

A return to work from sick leave due to mental health problems presupposes collaboration between the Swedish Social Insurance Agency and other welfare providers. A well-functioning collaborative process can contribute to creating possibilities for participation in working life or moving closer towards the labour market; increasing the efficiency of implemented measures; as well as increasing the overall quality and competence of the support given.

Many of the individuals that are on sick leave due to mental health problems have complex needs and therefore contact with many different parts of the welfare system. There are indications that structural and knowledge-based factors within the different forms of collaboration can be both obstacles and possibilities for achieving the aims of the collaboration.

There is therefore a need for research that can highlight different perspectives within collaborations such as how and when collaboration is appropriate, or not appropriate; in which way the collaboration can be developed; as well as what effects the collaboration has for individuals or groups within the social insurance process. Potential areas of research include best practices and how obstacles for an effective and well-functioning collaborative process between the relevant providers can be overcome.

Important starting points

The research funded by the call must address identified research needs and relate to Agenda 2030, the gender equality policy goals and the national public health policy objectives. The research funded by the call must, when relevant, be planned and undertaken in collaboration/co-creation with relevant target groups, for example affected professions, authorities, user organisations and interest groups. Further, Forte has the specific assignment of ensuring that the research that the authority funds must be beneficial for both organisations and the general public.

This can be in the form of new knowledge that is put into practice in the form of new ways of working or methods, or has an impact on political policy or management models.

We particularly encourage, when applicable, applied research, implementation research and research of a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral nature.

Grant type – project grant

One type of grant is available within this call – project grants. Project grants aim to support one or more researchers to carry out a defined research project. They are granted either for two or three years.

- **Grant limit:** Maximum SEK 5 million for three-year projects and SEK 3 million for two-year projects.
- **Eligibility requirements:** To apply for a project grant you must have obtained a doctoral degree no later than the date of the call closing. Already being a project leader for a Forte-funded project is no obstacle to applying in this call.

The main applicant does not have to be employed by the administrating organisation at the time of application but must be employed by the administrating organisation when the project period begins and throughout the duration of the project, unless otherwise agreed upon by Forte and the administrating organisation.

Main applicant and participating researchers

As main applicant, you are project leader and scientifically responsible for the project. The time you set aside for the project (your activity level, i.e., percentage of full-time employment) must be adapted to the task and project realisation throughout the grant period. Main applicants must hold a doctoral degree.

Participating researchers are other researchers whose participation will be essential for the realisation of the planned research. These do not have to be employed at a Swedish Higher Education Institution. Participating researchers are invited by the main applicant and must then themselves provide the necessary information in the application system and transfer this to the application. Participating researchers must hold a doctoral degree.

Any other participants in the project and their roles are described in more detail in the application. They can be salaried from the project but cannot be included as participating researchers in the application with their own accounts in Prisma. For these other participants in the project, there is no requirement for a doctoral degree.

Restrictions

You may only submit one application as the main applicant in this call.

Reasons for early refusal and rejection

Forte performs checks on submitted applications before they are made available to reviewers. Listed below are the reasons why applications are refused or rejected in advance:

- The main applicant does not have an approved doctoral degree
- The main applicant has not reported previously awarded grants from Forte within the set time
- The project falls outside the focus area of the call or Forte's areas of health, working life and welfare

- The application exceeds the specified grant limit
- The application has not been signed by the administrating organisation within 7 days after the closure of the call

The application process

All applications are to be submitted via the [Prisma application and review system](#). Since applications are reviewed by international experts, your application should be written in English (except for fields where Swedish is specifically requested). If the application is written in Swedish, the quality of the assessment may be compromised. Forte is not responsible for the quality of any translations.

Before writing your application, make sure the following conditions are met:

- You have created a personal account in Prisma
- All participating researchers 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 »](#)

For more information on how to fill out the application, see instructions on the call's website.

The review process

Once you have submitted your application, it is handed over to Forte's review panels for assessment. The review panels are composed of researchers and Swedish community representatives. Based on their assessment, Forte's board makes the final decisions on which applications will be granted.

To be eligible for funding from Forte, applications must be of high scientific quality, societal relevance and feasibility. Applications are assessed against our general assessment criteria and general requirements. The assessment is an overall assessment that weighs up all the criteria and requirements and relates them to the call and its objectives. Key to the assessment is how the applicant has justified the various choices made in the application (of the research question(s), theory, method, etc.).

In cases where two or more applications are judged to be equivalent in the overall assessment, the review panel may give priority to applications from applicants of the under-represented gender. By under-represented gender, Forte refers to the gender that has a lower success rate in relation to the number of applicants. In the second instance, the review panel may give priority to applications that contribute to a greater variety of research questions and themes among the funded projects.

[Read more about Forte's processes for assessment and final decisions »](#)

Application requirements

All applications must meet the following requirements in order to receive funding. The extent to which these requirements are met is part of the overall assessment by the review panel.

- The research must be relevant to Forte's areas and the focus of the call.
- The application must address and justify if a gender perspective is applicable or not to the research and how this is taken into account in the research.
- The research must be conducted ethically, and the application must address the ethical aspects of the research and how any ethical issues will be handled.

Assessment criteria

The various criteria are given equal weighting in the assessment. The extent to which these criteria are met is part of the overall assessment by the review panel.

Scientific quality

- Purpose, research questions, theoretical framework and background
How well and coherently the purpose, research questions, theoretical framework and background of the research are described, justified and grounded in previous research.
- Study design, empirical material and methods for data collection and analysis
How well and coherent the research design, methods and empirical material are described and justified, as well as the appropriateness of these in relation to the purpose of the research, research questions, and the potential for relevant results.
- Originality
The originality of the research and its potential to develop new knowledge (including novel methods, theories and/or data).
- Multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary approach, where applicable
The relevance of a multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary approach, and how this is considered and justified in the application.

Societal relevance and utilisation

- Relevance to the wider community
The societal challenges to which the research relates, how the research intends to help address these challenges, and how well the need for the research is described and justified to the research stakeholders, the general public and/or the wider community.
- Benefit for the wider community
How the research is expected to lead to short or long-term benefit for the research stakeholders, the general public and/or the wider community, and how this benefit is intended to be promoted.
- Collaboration with the wider community, where applicable
How inclusion in the research process of actors affected by the research (such as users, patients, practitioners, professions, policymakers) has been considered and justified in the application, and, where applicable, how well this has been formulated.

- Communication of research results

Whether dissemination of research results is planned for all relevant audiences, as well as the soundness of planned communication (such as in academic and/or popular science articles, books, seminars, workshops, training materials).

Feasibility

- Quality of the work plan

The clarity and reasonableness of the work plan (including the schedule) in relation to the needs for conducting the research.

- Competence of the project manager and project team

Competence and skills of the participants (based on previous experience and achievements) in relation to the needs for conducting the research.

- Staffing and budgets

Reasonableness of budgeted costs and participants' planned activity level for conducting the research.

Guiding questions

These guiding questions are based on Forte's general assessment criteria. The purpose of the questions is to provide support for applicants in preparing their applications and to assist Forte's reviewers in the assessment process.

Guiding questions for the general requirements

- Is the research within Forte's fields and the focus of the call? [Read more about Forte's fields of research »](#)
- Can a sex and gender perspective add anything important to the research, and if so, has this been appropriately included?
- Is the research described in accordance with the principles of research ethics and good research practice and have any ethical issues been appropriately addressed? [Read more in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity \(vr.se\) »](#)

Guiding questions for scientific quality

- Is the need for the research well justified and grounded in existing research?
- Are the research questions well formulated and well substantiated?
- Are central theoretical perspectives and concepts well described and well justified?
- Are the research methods clearly described and are they best suited to answer the research questions posed?
- Have potential problems with the research methods (such as systematic errors) been taken into account as well as measures for dealing with these?
- Does the research have the potential to generate important findings and significantly advance existing knowledge in the field of research? Are theories, data, methods, etc. used in a novel way to answer the research questions?
- Would the quality of the research benefit from a multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary approach, and if so, is such an approach used effectively?

Guiding questions for societal relevance and utilisation

- Are the research questions, outcome measures and central perspectives relevant to actors affected by the research (such as users, patients, practitioners, professions, policymakers)? Is this relevance well described and justified?
- Is there a well-described plan for how the research will be of use in the wider community and for the actors affected by the research?
- Will actors affected by the research be involved in conducting it? Is there a well-described plan for how and in which parts of the research process collaboration will take place? Does the project budget include costs for this collaboration?
- Is there a well-described plan for how the research will be communicated, both within academia as well as to the wider community and relevant stakeholders?

Guiding questions for feasibility

- Is the work plan realistic and suitable for conducting the research and reaching the set goals?
- Is it clear from the application that the project manager and project team have the competence needed to conduct the research and reach set goals?
- Are the budget and the participants' planned activity levels realistic and suitable for conducting the research and reaching set goals?
- Have potential problems or risks associated with conducting the research been described well, and is there any plan for dealing with them?

Collaboration between research and society

Forte is commissioned by the government to increase collaboration between research and society. The aim of collaboration is to contribute to higher quality and relevance in research. Forte assesses how collaboration will be implemented with relevant stakeholders in all calls. However, collaboration may not be applicable in all research.

Collaboration can be part of one or more parts of the research process. The more parts of the research process that relevant stakeholders are involved in, the higher the level of collaboration. Collaboration may, for example, take place if the stakeholders are involved in an advisory group/reference group tied to the project or as members of the project team. However, there is no fixed model or set of tools and techniques for collaboration.

Collaboration can be divided into different levels depending on the degree of involvement in the project. Only involving stakeholders as study object and contributing with data does not meet the requirements for collaboration in research.

In the research projects where collaboration is included, the application should contain a description of the different approaches that are being considered and the process for involving stakeholders in the research project.

International research collaboration

Forte is positive towards international research collaborations. Forte's area of responsibility covers complex societal challenges in which international research

collaborations can provide important contributions. [Read more about how Forte assesses applications where parts of the research are to be conducted abroad »](#)

Open Access

By accepting grants from Forte, you as a project leader also accepts Forte's guidelines for publication with Open Access. [Read more about Forte's guidelines for publishing with open access »](#)

Forte does not cover costs for Open Access publishing within the framework of individual research grants. Therefore, costs for such publications should not be applied for. In the Swedish context there are several agreements for publication which mean that no direct costs for the project should arise, if the organisation to which the article author belongs to is covered by the agreement. Such publications are prepaid by the organisations through the agreements. The universities' libraries normally provide support regarding these issues. In cases where costs for Open Access publishing are included in the application, these will be deducted from the budget.

SweCRIS

Forte transfers information of issued grants to SweCRIS, a national database on grant-funded research set up at the request of the government. [Read more about SweCRIS »](#)

Schedule

The call opens: 18 April, 2023, 10:00 CEST

The call closes: 8 June, 2023, 14:00 CEST

Funding decision: November, 2023

Decisions are published: November, 2023

Project start: 1 December, 2023

Support

Forte has compiled the most frequently asked questions and answers regarding the application process. [Read more about Questions and answers about applying for grants from Forte »](#)

If you have any questions about the call or how to fill in the application form, please contact:

Frida Alicedotter Bartonek, Senior research officer, frida.alicedotter-bartonek@forte.se

Lidija Kolouh, Programme manager, lidija.kolouh@forte.se

Emilie Löfgren-Jarl, Research officer, emilie.lofgren-jarl@forte.se

Olle Lundberg, Secretary general, olle.lundberg@forte.se