



**FORTE:**

Swedish Research Council for  
Health, Working Life and Welfare

# Research for the socially sustainable society of tomorrow

Forte's contribution to the Swedish  
Government's research policy from  
2025 onwards

Forte, December 2023  
Photo: Scandinav  
ISBN: 978-91-88561-57-2

Forte - Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare  
Box 38084, 100 64 Stockholm  
Phone: 08-775 40 70, e-mail: [fortefirforte.se](mailto:fortefirforte.se)  
[www.forte.se](http://www.forte.se)

# SUMMARY

Forte, the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare, is a Swedish Government authority under the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. We promote and support research in the areas of health, working life and welfare. Forte's vision is that the research that we support today lays the scientific basis for a more equal and socially sustainable society tomorrow.

## Forte's goals are to:

- initiate and fund research which makes a difference to society and people's lives
- initiate and fund research of high scientific quality
- be an active participant in knowledge-building in Sweden and globally

We achieve our goals by funding research in our areas and mapping the state of knowledge through analyses, evaluations and knowledge overviews. Our work takes place through continuous dialogue with researchers and other community stakeholders, as well as through communication of research and research results.

A number of major changes, at global and national level, are challenging Swedish society's resilience and sustainability. Increased inequality and social tensions, violence and criminality, demographic changes and rapid digitalisation affect individuals and social systems. Ensuring there is a skilled workforce in the public and private sector in future, as well as the transition to a more sustainable society for the climate and environment, are other major challenges.

Research is essential to society's collective ability to meet societal challenges and build a socially sustainable society. Research helps to increase our understanding of different phenomena and

problems in society, as well as how they can be handled and solved. Within the areas of health, working life and welfare, more research and knowledge are required as regards our welfare systems, governance, management and organisation, as well as the accessibility and person-centredness of healthcare. More knowledge is required on preventive work and early interventions in school, healthcare, care of the elderly and social services to reduce physical and mental illness, social problems and inequality.

Other examples of research needs include how the living conditions of individuals and groups develop and the prerequisites for more equal living conditions throughout people's lives. The consequences of digitalisation and welfare technology for human beings, working life and the welfare system are other research needs, as well as knowledge which can help to manage the future shortage of labour in certain sectors.

The long-term social challenges and research requirements need to be met by different types of research initiatives. Forte's thematically broad calls for proposals are important in order to ensure a wide range of research questions. In certain areas, Forte is already working on a number of long-term, targeted initiatives which can fully or partially take care of identified needs. In addition, new initiatives are needed in those areas where there is a great need for more research.

In Forte's supporting documents for the Government's upcoming research and innovation bill, we describe urgent knowledge requirements in healthcare, working life and welfare and suggest research initiatives which can contribute to the socially sustainable society of tomorrow, as well as recommendations for the development of research policy.

## Proposals and assessments regarding current research funding

### **Forte proposes that:**

- Forte's research grants are supplemented with SEK 60 million per year in order to be able to fund a wide range of research within Forte's areas through thematically broad calls for proposals and to support researchers to a greater extent at the start of their academic careers to establish themselves as independent researchers.
- The 10-year national research programmes Working Life Research and Applied Welfare Research continue according to plan and with previously announced budgets (SEK 80 million and 100 million per year, respectively).
- The budget for the 10-year national research programme on Mental Health is doubled from SEK 60 million per year to SEK 120 million per year, to respond to the great needs in this complex and wide area.
- Forte receives an increase in research funding in the area of the elderly of SEK 15-20 million per year for four years to implement a targeted research initiative on dementia.
- Forte's commission for a special initiative in prevention and public health is extended and increased from SEK 45 million per year to SEK 60 million per year in order to respond to the great demand for research in this area.



# Proposals for new research initiatives

Forte's current initiatives respond to a number of the long-term research needs which have been identified. However, for some of the research needs highlighted, Forte can see that special targeted initiatives with strategic and long-term coordination are required to meet the need for more knowledge.

## **Forte proposes the following new research initiatives:**

- A 10-year national research programme focussing on conditions in childhood, with a gradually increasing budget of up to SEK 100 million per year.
- A special initiative on research into women's health and diseases with a gradually increasing budget of up to SEK 60-80 million per year for 7-8 years.
- A special initiative in research and development of integrated care, with a gradually increasing budget of up to SEK 60-80 million per year for 7-8 years.
- A 6-year initiative in research into violence in close relationships with funding of SEK 25 million per year.

# Recommendations for developing Swedish research policy

Forte presents a number of viewpoints and recommendations for the development of Swedish research policy to improve the quality and increase internationalisation and utilisation of research and innovations.

## **To increase excellence in Swedish research:**

- Research policy focuses on creating good conditions for and promoting pluralism in research with the aim of laying the foundations for excellent research, internationalisation and innovation. This strengthens society's ability to meet existing challenges, as well as unknown future challenges.
- The funding schemes will offer different forms of grants and calls for proposals; from wide-reaching calls for proposals to more targeted and needs-driven calls for proposals to promote pluralism in research.
- The government needs to allocate resources so that higher education institutions have the prerequisites for building strong research and innovation environments, which are an important breeding ground for in-depth and ground-breaking research and innovation. The resources must be long-term, stable and predictable and meaningful for the research community, as well as for handling key societal challenges.

## **To increase the impact of Swedish research, innovations and needs-driven initiatives:**

- The government increases Forte's research funding by SEK 25 million per year to be used for activities and calls for proposals which contribute to collaboration, implementation and utilisation of research results.
- The government provides higher education institutions with better conditions and stronger incentives for collaboration and utilisation of research with players outside of the academic context.
- The government increases research funding to support the transition to open access to research results and data. Forte should be commissioned to support the National Library of Sweden's and the Bibsam Consortium's funding of open journals by injecting SEK 7 million into Forte's research funding, which will go to open journals, through Bibsam or its own calls for proposals.
- New national research programmes are scaled up gradually and receive a budget based on their scope and objectives, and have fewer but more realistic and measurable research policy goals which they are expected to meet.



- Needs driven-research initiatives should be coordinated with other national development, change and reform work in a purposeful way in order to accelerate social development and a sustainable transition.

#### **To increase the internationalisation of Swedish research:**

- The Swedish Government increases resources for state research funding bodies so that they can increase the level of their advocacy work within the European framework programme. Forte's administrative funding should increase by SEK 5 million per year to be able to allocate sufficient human resources to the advocacy work, and to be able to take part to a greater extent in more initiatives and partnerships relevant to Forte's areas.
- Forte is commissioned to conduct an analysis of Sweden's participation in the European framework programme within our areas in order to produce clearer supporting documents and a picture of objectives for more strategic advocacy work with developed links to national research programmes.
- The Swedish Government revises the assignment to the EU coordination function (EU-sam) in order to make the Swedish EU coordination for the framework programme for research and innovation more strategic.

# Overview of Forte's budget requests

## Maintained and extended investments in submission (million SEK)

	2025	2026	2027	2028
Maintained investment in Working Life national research programme (NFP)	80	80	80	80
Maintained investment in Applied Welfare national research programme	100	100	100	100
Maintained investment in Mental Health national research programme	60	60	60	60
Maintained investment in the Elderly	30	30	30	30
Extended investment in Prevention and Public Health	45	45	45	45
<b>TOTAL maintained and extended investments</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>315</b>

## Funding increase compared to 2023-levels (million SEK)

	2025	2026	2027	2028
Increased investment in Forte's annual calls for proposals for project grants and establishment grants	60	60	60	60
Increased investment in Mental Health national research programme	60	60	60	60
Increased investment in the Elderly (dementia)	20	20	20	20
Increased investment in Prevention and Public Health	15	15	15	15
New national research programme on Safe and Equal Conditions in Childhood	1	30	60	100
New investment in research on Women's Health and Diseases	20	40	60	80
New investment in Research on Integrated Care	20	40	60	80
New investment in research on Violence in Close Relationships	25	25	25	25
Investment in implementing and utilising research results and collaboration between research and surrounding society	25	25	25	25
Investment in the transition to open science	7	7	7	7
<b>TOTAL new investments</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>472</b>
<b>TOTAL research funding included in submission</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>787</b>

NFP = national research programme

For those investments where Forte has specified a range regarding the budget, the higher figure has been stated in the table. Forte also proposes an increase in administrative funding of SEK 5 million for increased human resources for work within the European framework programme.



[www.forte.se](http://www.forte.se)