

Applied welfare research 2022

Information about the call

There is one type of grant available within this call, project grants. In total, around SEK 40 million is reserved for the period 2022-2025. The deadline for applications is 14 December 2021 at 14:00.

Focus area

Forté is responsible for a national research programme for applied welfare research. The research programme aims to promote client and practice-oriented research in the field of applied social services. Client and practice-oriented research is based on issues that are relevant in regard to the needs of social services and clients and which can lead to benefits and usability for clients, social services activities and society as a whole. This can include research about how social services operate, results, and effects from a client and user perspective that can provide a basis for the development of social services. The initiative aims at strengthening collaborations between research and practice and increasing the participation of users and those close to users. (Read more under “Collaboration/Co-production between research and practice”).

The research that is funded shall fulfil the requirements of high quality and preferably encompass several different disciplines and scientific competencies. Forté welcomes various forms of scientific approaches, both qualitative and quantitative or mixed-method studies are welcomed.

The focus of the call is based on eight priority areas. They are presented in more detail in the [programme’s strategic agenda](#). We also refer to the [analysis conducted by Forté and SBU regarding social services-related research needs](#) from the perspective of users and practitioners. Applications within this call are to focus on one or more of the following priority research topics (please note that these areas overlap, so one application may focus on several areas).

1. **Effects of interventions.** There is a need for more intervention research that evaluates the effects of the interventions used in social services based on individual-oriented outcomes. Research is needed on both existing interventions and the development and evaluation of new initiatives. The social aspects of interventions need to be highlighted, such as methods for interpersonal communication, creating relationships and approaches. There is also a need for additional research regarding the cost-effectiveness of different interventions.
2. **Methods for needs assessment for individuals.** Research on methods for investigating, assessing and describing individuals’ problems, situation and need for interventions. There is a need for both quantitative research and research with a qualitative approach that investigates interpersonal communication, interactions and

the creation of relationships, and how this impacts the assessment.

3. **Early/preventive measures of the social services.** More knowledge is needed on the effects of the preventive, early and outreach measures of the social services. In addition to the individual and group perspectives, the research area also includes community-based social services. There is a need for research on the effects and benefits of social services' involvement in community planning to help prevent social problems and contribute to a good social environment.
4. **Implementation and change management.** Research is needed on methods for translating new knowledge into practice as well as knowledge on how the organisation can be arranged to create a working culture centred on learning and quality improvement. There is also a need for research on methods for systematic follow-up, such as development and research on planning and follow-up tools, both for the social services' core activities and for treatment activities.
5. **Coherent service provision initiatives.** Research on coordination in the interface between the social services and, for example, healthcare services, schools, different authorities and civil society. The research needs to evaluate the effects that coordination will have for the users. There is also a need for research on cooperation between municipalities and within local social services along with socio-economic aspects relating to coordination.
6. **User participation.** It is important to develop and evaluate methods based on the users' needs and to organise the work and working methods in the social services based on a user perspective. Research on methods for creating participation and influence, as well as the effects and consequences of user involvement. The user perspective is also an important aspect in research within the other priority research topics.
7. **Digitalisation and welfare technology.** Research on welfare technology to develop working methods, processes, organisation and interventions in the social services. The area covers research on ethical and legal aspects of welfare technology as well as health economics research on the effects on digitisation and welfare technology.
8. **Non-profit and entrepreneurial providers of social services.** Research on how changes to the social services and the division of responsibility in the form of privatisation affect the users, the quality and content of the services and the cost trend. The conditions for society's governance and control of this field are important research issues, as is the question of how the information to users and relatives should be organised and provided.

Collaboration/Co-production between research and practice

Research that has been financed by the programme is to be planned and conducted in collaboration with relevant target groups, for example: professions, user and interest

organisations and/or users and clients. This requires a more explorative approach, as the project is developed in collaboration/co-production with several stakeholders. The application must contain a description of the process and how collaboration/co-production will be achieved in the various parts of the research process:

- The design of the study (or intervention)
- Data collection
- Data analysis¹
- Interpreting¹
- Dissemination of results
- Implementation

The more parts of the research process that stakeholders are involved in, the higher the level of collaboration/co-production. It is important to note that collaboration/co-production results in increasing the quality and relevance of the research project. Collaboration/co-production may, for example, take place if the parties are involved in an advisory group/reference group tied to the project. Only involving users and clients or other stakeholders as study object and contributing with data does not meet the requirements for collaboration/co-production in research.

[Read more in the NIHR guidance on co-producing a research project.](#)

In order to meet the requirements for practice and client-oriented research and collaboration/co-production, applicants need to demonstrate the following:

- the research question is a priority for these groups
- the outcomes are important for clients and users
- clients and users will be involved in the research process, and
- the costs this will entail have been calculated and included in the project's budget.

Similar principles are to be applied if the research will primarily be conducted with practitioners or decision-makers, or other relevant stakeholders.

Forte recognises that it can be difficult to specifying precise methods and approaches for collaboration/co-production when the application is written as these should be developed in dialogue with those who are to be involved in the project. However, the applicant should be able to describe the range of approaches under consideration and the process by which users, clients and practitioners will be involved in agreeing the final methods and approaches for collaboration/co-production.

Grant types

There is one type of grant available within this call-project grants. Only one application per main applicant is allowed.

¹ Collaboration/Co-production on data analysis and interpretation can for example include discussing the results and conclusions with the participating stakeholders to receive their reactions and opinions. Researchers can then use this information in their continued work – i.e., as a form of quality assurance.

Project grant

Project grants are grants for individual research projects. Research projects must be based on the questions and needs of the profession and users/clients. The research projects must therefore be conducted in collaboration with social services, for example through regional support and collaboration structures, local R&D units, managers and staff. Applications may be submitted for a fourth year for complex and comprehensive research projects such as intervention studies, as well as for implementation and follow-up. An explanation justifying the need for a fourth year must be included in the application.

- **Grant limit:** This call welcomes applications for project funding for two, three, or four years. Forte has allocated a total of about SEK 40 million over a four-year period for project funding. There is no maximum limit for this type of funding, but the budget must be explained in the application. Forte grants an average of about SEK 1.3 million annually in project funding.
- **Eligibility requirements:** To apply for a project grant you must have completed a doctoral degree no later than the date of the call closing.

The application process

All applications are to be submitted via the [Prisma application and review system](#). 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. [Forte's criteria for approving 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 for each grant form on the call's website.

The review process

The applications are assessed by a review panel composed of international researchers and Swedish society representatives. Funding decisions are made by Forte's board.

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.

Forte's assessment criteria

Scientific quality:

- Purpose, research questions, theoretical framework, background and originality
- Study design, methods for data collection and analysis
- Interdisciplinary and/or multidisciplinary approach
- Sex and gender perspectives in the content of the research

Relevance:

- Relevance in relation to societal needs, Forte's areas of responsibility and the focus area of the call
- Engagement with end users
- Utilisation and communication of research results

Feasibility:

- Work plan quality
- Research competence of project leader and research group
- Account of any previous own research in the area
- Staffing and budget, assessed on reasonableness

Guiding questions

Applications will be assessed based on the respective evaluation criteria, which are in turn based on guiding questions. The guiding questions are presented below.

Scientific quality

Research questions

- Has the need for the research been explained? Is the scientific uncertainty described based on existing research? Are the project's research questions well described and well founded?
- Are the central concepts well defined and theoretically coherent?
- To what extent can the project increase knowledge about the functioning, results and effects of social services? To what extent can the project result in improving initiatives, support, measures or organisational aspects within social services that ultimately result in improvements for social services' target groups?
- Are there sex and gender perspectives in the content of the research, if this is applicable?

Methodology

- Is the methodological approach the best suited to answer the project's research questions based on given conditions?
- Is the project's methodology well described and well founded? Have potential problems/pitfalls been taken into account in the methodology or research process, and how they can be handled? Where relevant (e.g. intervention studies), is the

handling of potential biases described during the research process and the processing of results?

- Does the project have the potential to significantly advance the research area? For example, are theories, data and methods used in an innovative way to approach the scientific issue?
- Does the project have an interdisciplinary and/or multidisciplinary approach, if this is relevant?

Relevance

- Has it been made sure that the research questions are relevant to social services and relevant target groups?
- Does the project have the potential to increase knowledge of the functioning, results and effects of social services?
- Does the project link in to one or more of the programme's priority research areas?
- Does the project have the potential to improve initiatives, support, measures or organisational aspects within social services that ultimately result in improvements for social services' target groups?
- Is there a clear plan describing how the research results are to be communicated, both in practice and academia, and utilised?

Collaboration/co-production with representatives of social services, professions, users and other stakeholders in the research process

- How has the project been established and accepted within social services and with other relevant stakeholders? Are there documents to support collaboration/co-production (for example in the form of a letter of intent)?
- How and in which parts of the research process (study design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, dissemination and implementation) does collaboration/co-production with practice and/or user/user organisations or other relevant stakeholders take place? How has collaboration/co-production affected the study design, for example the selection of outcomes that are relevant to clients and users?
- Have all the important perspectives/stakeholders relevant to the research project been included? Is the choice of perspective explained?
- Does the proposal describe practical measures to enable people to participate (for example, people with various disabilities)?
- What are the different perspectives/stakeholders to contribute with and what mandate/role/responsibility do they have? Are the roles and mandates clear?
- Does the project budget include costs for collaboration/coproduction, such as costs and fees to clients and users?

Feasibility

- Is the project's timetable, planning and budget realistic and appropriate, and the design and choice of approach adequate for the project's conduction and expected results?
- Are adequate resources available for the research project, including supervision and possible equipment?

- Are materials, methods, models, and, if applicable, patient and/or user cohorts sufficient and well adapted to the hypothesis or the scientific questions?
- How strong are the applicant's qualifications and competence in relation to the research area and previous research environment? Does the research group have previous experience and competence in conducting client- and practice-oriented research?
- Does the applicant have sufficient clinical and scientific experience, expertise, independence and scientific networks to carry out the project?

Guidelines on how Forte handles applications where part of the research is to be carried out abroad

- 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.
- Forte's grants can be used to finance research where certain parts are carried out in other countries. However, the research shall be initiated and led from Sweden or be a clear part of the collaborative research.
- Applications involving international collaborations are assessed against the same criteria as other research applications and by the same review panels.
- In assessing research applications, the reviewers in Forte's review panels shall assess if any foreign section of a project brings added value to a project or is a prerequisite for a project with, for example, a global or comparative approach.
- It is the main applicant's responsibility to: find out how his or her administrating organisation stands on financing research where certain parts are carried out in other countries, and to find suitable collaboration procedures in each specific case.
- It is the grant's administrating organisation, i.e. the main applicant's home institution in Sweden, that determines and is responsible for, if necessary, appointing foreign personnel or paying for activities or services carried out in other countries.

Open access

Results from research funded by Forte shall be published with open access. [Read more about Open Access.](#)

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.](#)

Time plan

The call closes: 14 December 2021

Forte's board decides on funding: March 2022

Project start: 1 April 2022