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Research policy





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Introduction

Psychological defence safeguards the open and democratic society, freedom of opinion formation, and Sweden's freedom and independence. Sweden's psychological defence comprises the collective ability of society to identify and withstand malign information influence and other forms of misleading information directed at Sweden with the aim of influencing our decisions, perceptions, or behavior.

Research plays a central role in generating new knowledge and building a strong, resilient and modern psychological defence as part of Sweden's total defence, both today and in the future.

For Sweden to develop and maintain the knowledge and expertise required in the field of psychological defence, it is important that the Swedish Psychological Defence Agency (MPF) actively promotes and funds research within its area of responsibility. Psychological defence is a multidisciplinary field of research in which contributions from different academic disciplines can complement one another and provide new perspectives.

Under its mandate, MPF shall, in particular, monitor, commission, and disseminate research and other forms of knowledge development relating to psychological defence. MPF compiles and disseminates knowledge from current research in the field of psychological defence but does not conduct research of its own. Drawing on research findings, MPF coordinates and supports other actors within the psychological defence system and communicates relevant knowledge to the wider community.

It is important for MPF to promote both the development and dissemination of research-based knowledge. MPF is a knowledge-based organization, and this document, *MPF Research policy*, sets out the Agency's overarching strategy for scientific research.

Purpose of the research policy and objectives of MPF research funding

The purpose of the research policy is to provide a comprehensive, agency-wide description of how research related to MPF is funded, planned and assessed by the Agency.

The Agency has three principal objectives regarding research:

1. Contribute to strengthening national capabilities in psychological defence

This includes strengthening the population's resilience to malign information influence and promoting the will to defend Sweden.

One of MPF's central responsibilities is to contribute to strengthening national capabilities in psychological defence. This can be achieved through a range of activities, often directed towards external stakeholders, including training, lectures and exercises based on research and established knowledge and experience. High-quality scientific research within the Agency's area of responsibility is essential to ensuring that national capabilities can be developed effectively.

MPF shall also strengthen the population's ability to identify and withstand influence operations and disinformation, as well as promote the will to defend Sweden. Research that contributes to psychological defence helps build resilience and strengthen the will to defend the country among the population and across society as a whole.

2. Strengthen the Agency's own activities in accordance with its mandate to coordinate, develop and provide support to actors within psychological defence

The Agency's responsibilities include identifying and analyzing malign information influence and other forms of misleading information directed at Sweden or Swedish interests, and providing support in responding to such influence.

Research funded by MPF shall contribute to strengthening the ability to address current and future challenges within the Agency's area of responsibility within psychological defence.

3. Promote the development of knowledge and strengthen psychological defence as a field of research

New knowledge generated through research does not emerge in isolation. It depends on the continued development of the field and on the research community taking an interest in its evolving challenges and research questions.

For MPF, it is particularly important that psychological defence continues to develop as a field of research and remains an attractive area for researchers to study in greater depth.

As the Agency does not conduct research of its own, MPF has an important role to play as a hub that can, in various ways, contribute both to stimulating and making use of knowledge development in the field.

Initiation of research projects

The Agency initiates research projects through direct applications from researchers. Applications received are considered collectively within the Agency on an annual basis. The cut-off date for applications is **1 October**.

Applicants are encouraged to contact MPF before submitting an application.

Application process and disbursement of research funds

Application process

All applications shall be submitted using the research application template provided by MPF on its website.

The principal applicant shall hold a doctoral degree and be affiliated with a university, higher education institution, research institute or equivalent organization.

Disbursement of research funds

As a general rule, approved research projects shall request research funds from MPF on two occasions per year: once in the spring and once in the autumn.

During the final year of a project, 10 percent of the total project funding should be withheld until the project has been fully accounted for and formally closed.

The project shall be finally reported no later than three months after the project end date.



Assessment

The Agency has a research and studies review group consisting of employees holding doctoral degrees. The Agency applies the following criteria when assessing scientific research projects:

- Relevance to Sweden's psychological defence
- Scientific quality
- Feasibility
- The applicant's expertise and qualification

Decision

The above *Research Policy* shall apply at MPF. At the same time, the Agency's Policy *MPF/2023:411* shall cease to apply.

This decision was taken by Director-General Magnus Hjort following a presentation by the Research Coordinator Peder Hyllengren. Head of Unit Tor-Björn Åstrand and Chief Legal Adviser Daniel Karfs also participated in the final deliberations.

Magnus Hjort

Peder Hyllengren