

DATE: 11/06/2026

REFERENCE NUMBER: MPF/2026:272

Research Priorities 2026–2028

The Agency's research activities shall strengthen society's resilience against malign information influence, disinformation and other forms of cognitive threats. The research shall be interdisciplinary, practice-oriented and support long-term knowledge building. It shall also contribute to evidence-based methods, policy development, and both operational and long-term capability in the field of psychological defence.

From 2026 to 2028, the Agency's research priorities will encompass five research areas. Applicants may seek funding for projects falling within any of these areas.

Will to defend and population resilience
Threat actors
Digital environments and artificial intelligence
Society and democracy
Human cognition and behaviour

1. Will to defend and population resilience

Within the area of will to defend and population resilience, further research is needed to generate new and up-to-date knowledge. The research shall strengthen Sweden's psychological defence by deepening understanding of the factors that affect the will to defend and population resilience in peacetime, crisis and war. This priority aims to develop an evidence base for measures that strengthen and sustain trust, social cohesion and readiness to act during periods of societal strain and hostile influence.

These issues have taken on renewed urgency in light of the deteriorating international security environment in general and Russia's aggression in our immediate neighbourhood in particular. There is a need both for relevant data describing trends and developments and for research that can be translated into policy-relevant support for decision-making to strengthen population resilience and the will to defend.

2. Threat actors

Malign information influence targeting Sweden and Swedish interests can be conducted by both state and non-state actors. Research shall contribute new knowledge about threat actors' methods, strategies and activities in the information environment.

Research is also needed to examine how threat actors combine malign information influence with other hybrid means and forms of influence. Furthermore, greater knowledge is needed about threat actors' own vulnerabilities and limitations.

3. Digital environments and artificial intelligence

This area encompasses research into how digital platforms, algorithms and emerging technologies affect the dissemination and amplification of malign information influence, as well as susceptibility to it.

The research shall enhance understanding of how digital environments shape the dissemination of information, opinion formation and influence in peacetime, crisis and war. Particular attention shall be paid to social media, platform dynamics, algorithmic amplification mechanisms and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence.

Research may, for example, analyse how automated accounts, inauthentic networks and data-driven audience targeting affect and amplify malign information influence.

4. Society and democracy

This area aims to generate new knowledge about the role of psychological defence in society. This may, for example, include opinion surveys and studies of media, trust and societal vulnerabilities relevant to psychological defence.

The aim is to provide in-depth knowledge that improves understanding of how the various components of psychological defence can be developed and strengthened.

5. Human cognition and behaviour

This research priority focuses on deepening understanding of the cognitive processes that underpin how people perceive, process and act on information in complex societal and organisational contexts.

It is also essential to increase knowledge of how individuals and groups receive, interpret and are affected by information, with particular emphasis on psychological vulnerabilities and mechanisms that can be exploited for malign information influence.

**Decision**

This decision was taken by Director-General Magnus Hjort following a presentation by Research Coordinator Peder Hyllengren. Head of Department Lina Karlsryd, Head of Unit Tor-Björn Åstrand and Chief Legal Counsel Daniel Karfs also participated in the final consideration of the matter.

Magnus Hjort

Peder Hyllengren