

INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY

International Strategy for FAS 2009–2012



SWEDISH COUNCIL FOR WORKING LIFE
AND SOCIAL RESEARCH

International Strategy for FAS

2009–2012

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Key to abbreviations and acronyms

CESSDA	Council of European Social Science Data Archives, http://www.CESSDA.org/
ECRP	European Collaborative Research Projects in the Social Sciences, http://www.esf.org/activities/eurocores/running-programmes/ecrp.html
EMRC	European Medical Research Councils, http://www.esf.org/nc/research-areas/medical-sciences.html
ERC	European Research Council, http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm
ERA	European Research Area
ESFRI	European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures, http://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/index_en.cfm?pg=esfri
ESS	European Social Survey, http://ess.nsd.uib.no/
ESF	European Science Foundation, www.esf.org
ESF -	Research Networking programmes: http://www.esf.org/activities/research-networking-programmes.html
ESCON 2	European Social Cognition Network 2,
EUROQUAL	Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences in Europe,
EUCCONET	The European Child Cohort Network
QMSS 2	Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences 2
TRANSEUROPE	TransEurope Research Network
ESF MO Fora	ESF Member Organisation Fora, http://www.esf.org/activities/mo-fora.html
EURAXESS	The European Services Network, a network initiated by the European Commission, consists of more than 200 Euraxess centres in the member states which offer every conceivable service to prospectively mobile researchers. http://ec.Europe.eu/euraxess/index_en.cfm
SCSS	ESF Standing Committee for Social Science,
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, http://www.sida.se/English/
SUHF	The Association of Swedish Higher Education, http://www.suhf.se/web/In_English.aspx

International objectives and instruments

Background

FAS is responsible for research within public health, working life and social science. Research in these fields is the focus of growing international attention. This reflects the increasingly transborder and internationalised nature of the research; a development which should be supported. In recent years, FAS has intensified its efforts in this respect. On behalf of the Swedish government, FAS in the autumn of 2007 developed a research strategy for the period 2009–2012. The international strategy here presented is a further elaboration of the international segment of that strategy and takes the current Research Bill 2008/09:50, “A boost to research and innovation” into consideration. In the Bill, requirements in the international area are vaguely formulated. This should be interpreted to indicate that the research funding agencies are in a good position to formulate their own international strategies. The present document has been developed in light of this: see the Bill, page 209, lines 4-6, “Government therefore wants strongly to emphasize the importance of all institutes of higher education and research funding agencies having a strategy for international cooperation”.

General objectives

The forces of globalisation present new challenges which also impact trends in science and research. Globalisation of the arena is making it increasingly important for researchers and research funding agencies to be competitive. Research within FAS’s areas of responsibility is the focus of growing international interest, in the European as well as the global arena. FAS has therefore decided to develop a more comprehensive international strategy in order to further highlight important efforts in the area and present FAS’s visions with respect to future trends within this field.

Through its activities, FAS should also promote understanding of the science and raise its social status for users both within and outside the academic sphere.

FAS should work actively to reinforce Swedish research and act in its best interests through long-term funding based on a foundation of quality and expertise. Wherever possible, the entire operation should strive to adopt an international perspective in its work. In this endeavour, FAS’s most important objectives are:

OBJECTIVES:

- To be an active contributor to European research policy
- To stimulate Swedish participation in European and international research collaborations by various means
- To strive for increased utilisation of European and international research grants as reinforcement of Sweden's national research funding
- To strive for increased researcher mobility
- To work for positive development of the research infrastructure within its areas of responsibility
- To increase its involvement in the global area through collaboration with other funding agencies and targeted efforts with actors in other countries

INSTRUMENTS:

- Measures promoting internationalisation at the policy level
- Measures promoting internationalisation at the official level
- Measures promoting internationalisation in key areas, i.e. within the Nordic, European and global areas

Description of objectives

Objective: To be an active contributor to European research policy

In Europe, research and development is today considered an important prerequisite for economic and social prosperity, good quality of life and high employment. The EU framework programme for research and technological development is today one of the most important tools for research funding at the European level. FAS should therefore work actively for realisation of the European Research Area (ERA), the European area for research activity formulated by the Commission in its communication "Making a Reality of The European Research Area: Guidelines for EU research activities" (COM 2000:612 final). ERA's goal is for Europe to become a common research area which would make it more competitive and attractive. *FAS will work actively for the realisation of ERA.*

Instruments:

FAS will work actively for research within its areas of responsibility, as well as utilising opportunities for exerting a positive influence on the development of research in these areas. An important part of this work involves collaboration with other European and international research funding agencies. Another important aspect of the work is to influence policy and programme development in Brussels, not only through the directorate for research (DG Research) but also through other relevant general directorates (DG), of which the most important are likely to be the Directorate General

for Health and Consumer Protection (DG SANCO), the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, and EuropeAid (aid programmes and projects world-wide using EU financial instruments).

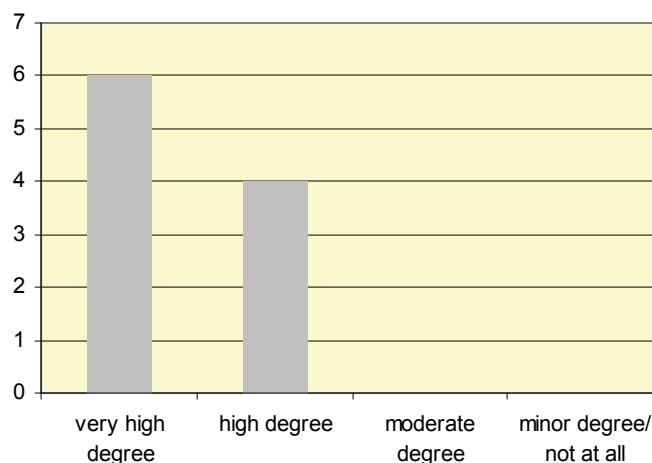
ESF, the European Science Foundation, also promotes European basic research and strives to develop different forms of research collaboration. It is therefore most important that FAS continues to pursue its collaboration with ESF.

FAS should implement various measures to raise the need for strong Swedish research within FAS’s areas of responsibility and influence European policy development to reflect these areas more appropriately. *Swedish participation in the EU Seventh Framework Programme* should remain at a high level, and FAS should actively work to reach these goals, by highlighting questions of the direction of future framework programmes, and how the future ERA should be administered from the research policy standpoint. Measures during the Swedish Presidency, the workshop on “*Social and Cultural Shocks*” (Tallin, in March 2009), and the “*New Worlds – New Solutions*” *Profile Conference* (Lund, in July 2009), resulted in the Lund Declaration in which future societal challenges were defined.

Objective: FAS should stimulate Swedish participation in European and international research collaborations by various means and promote the transfer of knowledge

The need for increased international cooperation is extensive and should be pursued on a broad front both in FAS’s internal prioritisations and vis-à-vis a number of different international actors at the Nordic, European and global levels. *FAS will strive for increased participation in international research collaborations.*

The charting of international activities undertaken by FAS in spring 2008 with respect to the 10 FAS centres funded by FAS shows that most researchers engage in some form of international collaboration; see below:



To what degree is international collaboration (cooperation in shared projects, networks, researcher exchanges or other “fixed” relations, journals) a significant element of your research environment?

Similar results were obtained in earlier surveys of international collaboration among researchers who receive FAS project funding. Collaboration above all seems to develop with English speaking countries, primarily the USA. Collaboration with other countries, including new EU member states, should be encouraged.

Instruments:

Nordic region – Nordforsk. To stimulate knowledge transfer at the Nordic level, FAS is a partner in three NORIANets, the “Nordic-Asia NORIA Net”, the “Development of Peer Review in the Nordic Context” and “Nordic network for International Research policy Analysis” (NIRPA). FAS also contributes financially to NordForsk’s welfare research programme and is on the Steering Committee for this programme.

EU – European Science Foundation (ESF) – FAS is a member of the European Science Foundation (ESF), collaborative organ for a number of European research councils and academies. FAS is presently involved in two of ESF’s EUROCORES programmes, one of which is the so-called ECRP (European Collaborative Research Projects in the Social Sciences) programme. FAS has decided to participate in the ECRP programme in the 2009–2011 period during which three annual announcements will take place. FAS also participates in a EUROCORE programme known by the acronym HumVIB which deals with methods for analysing attitudes and behaviours among citizens in a social, financial and political context by using data in existing European databases. FAS currently participates in five ESF network projects: the “Research Networking Programme”, “Transeurope”, “EUROQUAL”, “Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences 2, QMSS 2” and “The European Child Cohort Network, EUCCONET” programmes. In 2008, FAS joined an additional network, the “European Social Cognition Network, ESCON”. All networks fall under SCSS, the Standing Committee for the Social Sciences, with the exception of EUCCONET which falls under EMRC, the European Medical Research Councils.

ESF also has an instrument for knowledge transfer between member organisations (MO) known as ESF MO Fora. FAS is actively involved with four fora, namely “MO FORA on Research Careers”, “MO FORA on Evaluation of Funding schemes and Research Programmes”, the ESF MO Fora on Research Integrity and the ESF MO For a on Research Infrastructures.

FAS should strive for increased participation in various ESF programmes, such as EUROCORES programmes, network programmes, Forward Looks and MO Fora, when relevant to FAS’s areas of responsibility.

EU framework programmes

Compared to earlier framework programmes, the FP7 Cooperation Programme has an expanded budget for research within FAS’s areas of responsibility. The surveys of approved projects undertaken by FAS at regular intervals show that most researchers who have received research funding from FAS have international contacts and collaborative relationships. On the other hand they participate to a very limited extent in EU funded projects. Efforts to increase participation should be implemented both short and long term by various means, the most pressing being to influence the design of working programmes through active engagement in the Programme Committee reference groups, monitoring and support around announcements (internet newsletters, information days) and continued development of financial support for researchers

within FAS's areas of responsibility who want to participate in EU framework programmes (EU planning grants). FAS today works actively with the reference groups in the areas of Health, Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities, the European Research Council (ERC), Capacities, People (Marie Curie) and Science & Society. Researchers should also be encouraged to participate in several of these areas, such as People (e.g. Marie Curie), Capacities (Research Infrastructures) and Ideas (ERC).

Globally – Increased international participation is essential. Initially the focus should be on Asia (Japan, China and India) and the USA. FAS has appointed an investigator whose task is to develop documentation for future projects in the “Global Public Health” research area. FAS also works actively with preparation of proposals in the “Research Links programme” which is funded by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and administered by the Swedish Research Council for the purpose of promoting research collaboration between researchers in Sweden and researchers in more resource-rich developing countries.

Objective: FAS will strive to increase utilisation of European and international research grants as reinforcement of Sweden's national research funding

The question of joint funding and a so-called common pot is today one of the most important research policy issues in Europe. There are presently several different forms of joint funding at the European level (below), “Joint Programming” being the most extensive where research funding agencies decide on joint funding of research within a specific field. This can be associated with certain legal obstacles, which is currently being investigated. *FAS should monitor developments and work actively for joint initiatives within its areas of responsibility.*

Instruments:

Joint Programming

As a research field, public health is presently missing from the EU framework programme and the current description in the so-called Specific Programme is fragmentary and found under Theme 1 (Health) and Theme 8 (Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities, SSH). Proposing the area for “Joint Programming” is therefore a strategically pressing task. In the JP process one has to seek to achieve an effective commitment of Member States involved, choose themes focussed on European/global challenge, have clear and realistic objectives, with added value and with potential of generating benefits for European citizens. *FAS should strive to be involved in JP initiatives covering our areas of responsibility.*

ERANET collaborations

ERANET – Good contacts are maintained with several European research funding agencies in the framework of ongoing network collaboration between research funding agencies in Europe (ERA-NET) where FAS currently participates in three collaborations: ERA-AGE within elder research, WORK-IN-NET within working life research, and NEW OSH ERA within work environment research. The ERA-AGE collaboration has also resulted in an additional EU project, FUTURAGE, with the objective of developing a “Roadmap for Future Aging Research”. Joint calls have been implemented within all three ERANET collaborations.

Marie Curie COFAS

In 2007, EU for the first time announced a programme in the subarea of researcher mobility (Marie Curie COFUND), the target group being research funding agencies in member states (MS) and similar organisations that regularly announce grants for researcher mobility. The intention is for member states to seek cofunding of new or established postdoc programmes that they wish to develop or improve. FAS applied for and was granted the COFAS-FAS Marie Curie International Postdoc programme for the period 2009–2011. The project is cofunded with the European Commission. EU contributes with 40 percent of total costs for all postdoctoral positions in the expanded programme.

ESF – EUROCORES

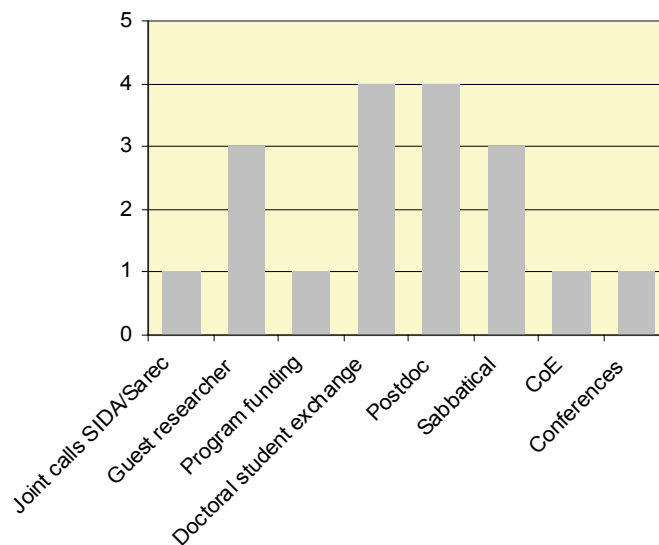
As mentioned, FAS is a member of the European Science Foundation (ESF) and participates with funding for a number of projects within two EUROCORE programmes. Within ECRP, support is given to high-quality European research collaborations (minimum three countries) without a “European added value” requirement, i.e. an EU focus is not required.

Objective: Strive to enable increased researcher mobility

It is essential for Sweden to keep up with trends in the area of researcher mobility, which is expected to continue increasing both at the European and global level. From the perspective of ever increasing competition for mobile researchers, between different countries as well as different universities, the ability to offer attractive conditions to researchers is of the greatest importance. *FAS should strive to offer researchers, at all stages of their research career, attractive opportunities for mobility within its areas of responsibility.*

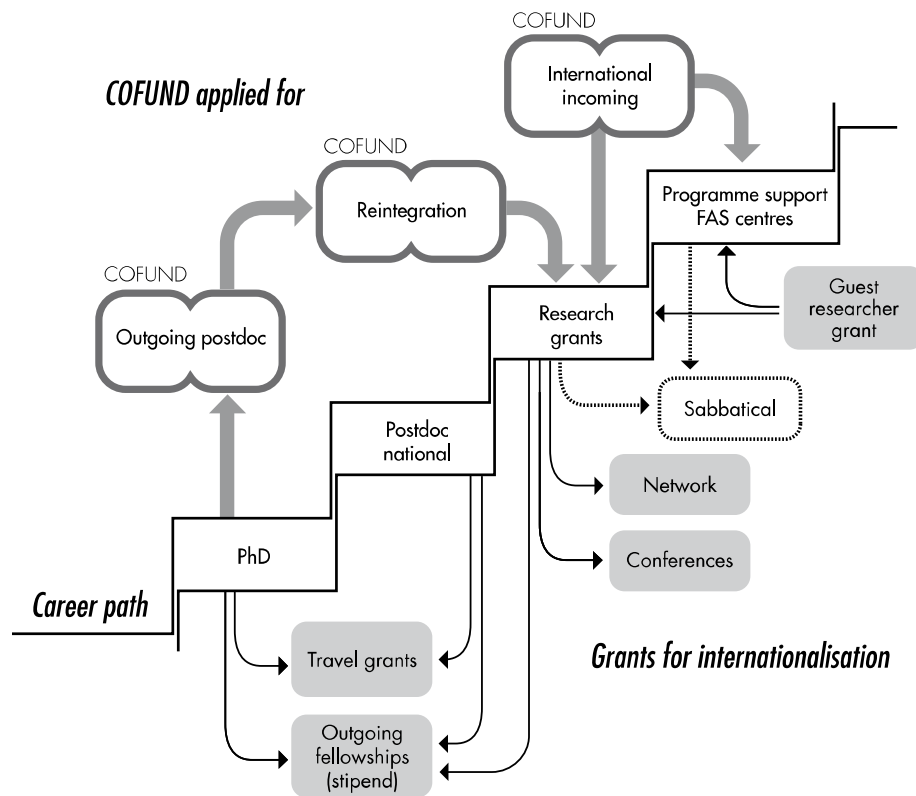
Instruments:

An important aspect of the international work is to increase researcher mobility, primarily by removing the obstacles that presently exist. These obstacles are currently well defined, e.g. in the report “*Realising a single labour market for researchers. European Commission Expert Group on Research Careers, 2008, EUR 23321 EN*”. Implementing the recommendation developed by the European Commission, “*The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, European Commission 2005/51/EG*”, significantly increases the possibility of removing these obstacles. When “the Charter & Code” was published, the matter was discussed in Sweden in the EURAXESS network with the result for Sweden’s part that SUHF (the Swedish Association of Higher Education) signed the document in April 2007. While the document as such is not legally binding, it functions by establishing practice. In this context, the “Careers for Quality” report from the Academic Career Enquiry, SOU 2007:98, should also be taken into account, one of its findings being the importance of removing the so-called postdoc cloud and introducing clear career services for this group of young researchers. In the survey of international activities undertaken by FAS in spring 2008 with respect to the 10 FAS centres funded by FAS, a clear picture emerged as to which forms of funding are being prioritised; see below.



Which type of funding do you consider especially important in order to enable increased internationalisation?

In 2008, FAS continued the work on formulating funding formats in a “career path for researchers” which was initiated in 2007. This has resulted in a clear ladder of funding formats, and new forms of funding of importance for the international work were launched in 2009. Here a significant component is the COFAS programme within the EU Marie Curie COFUND programme. This programme concerns two types of international postdoc positions, one involving Swedish researchers desiring sojourns at foreign institutions, the other involving foreign researchers wanting to pursue postdoctoral studies at a Swedish institution. The programme is an important complement to the forms of funding presently offered by FAS. A first announcement was called in spring 2009. The programme allows pressing changes to be implemented in the area of researcher mobility, including increased internationalisation and a first step towards converting fellowships to positions.



The FAS “career path” with different forms of funding.

Important measures here relate to further development of funding formats. In order to monitor the development work, FAS participates in an ESF MO Fora on Research Careers. FAS also belongs to the Swedish network linked to EURAXESS and to its steering group.

Objective: Work for positive development of the research infrastructure within its areas of responsibility

FAS finds it important to continue participating in infrastructure initiatives – most often development of databases – at the international level. Of particular importance for research within FAS’s area of responsibility is the continued development of the network of national data services within CESSDA (Council of European Social Science Data Archives) in order to create an effective system for “data sharing”, and the provision of funding for the social science databases prioritised under ESFRI (European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures) in order for them to operate and develop. *FAS will work actively for the positive development of research infrastructure within its areas of responsibility.*

Instruments:

Sweden enjoys a competitive advantage through its established person based longitudinal databases and participates in the development of a number of comparative databases of a high international standard. FAS currently contributes financially to the European Social Survey (ESS), a database of comparative surveys of social conditions and perceptions in several European countries which also receives funding from the EU. FAS is also a partner in ESSPrep, an FP7 infrastructure project within the

“Capacities” programme, which is cofunding this database. FAS furthermore contributes to the cost of the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS), a comparative database on income conditions in various countries which was initiated in the early 1980s. Its purpose is to create a high quality data material that will facilitate description and explanation of variations in income inequality, poverty etc. between countries. FAS has also supported the establishment of a related database on wealth, the Luxembourg Wealth Study.

FAS is part of the reference group on research infrastructure associated with the Programme Committee for Research Infrastructure with respect to Sweden’s work within the EU Seventh Framework Programme’s area for infrastructure, known as “Capacities”. FAS is moreover a member of the Council for Research Infrastructures of the Swedish Research Council.

To undertake an analysis of existing infrastructure projects at the national and international level and determine how well they cover the needs of researchers within FAS’s areas of responsibility is needed. FAS should also develop knowledge on how to work to obtain funding for new and existing, national as well as international, research infrastructure projects. A strategy for how best to disseminate knowledge about the need for relevant infrastructure projects should be developed. Here we can learn from researchers and representatives of the research community in the natural sciences who have very long experience of “lobbying” within their field.

Objective: FAS will increase its efforts in the global area, primarily through collaboration with other funding agencies, but also through targeted measures jointly with actors in other countries

Effective collaboration between different international actors is a prerequisite for making research within FAS’s areas of responsibility better known internationally. Increasing globalisation not only means increased competition for knowledge resources, but also opportunities for expanded international contacts. However, such development requires selectivity and prioritisations. *FAS will strive for increased measures at the global level.*

Work should primarily be directed toward countries where FAS has already initiated the process of contact creation. The work should also be linked to the Swedish Government’s memorandum on Policy for Global Development (PGU), which was presented by Government in 2008 and sets out areas and frameworks for global involvement.

Instruments:

Working globally – Increased international participation in the global arena is a priority. Initially the focus should be on Asia (Japan, China and India) and the USA where FAS has ongoing projects in order to establish collaboration agreements.

Cooperation with countries where Sweden has bilateral agreements

FAS may also take initiatives in areas where bilateral research agreements are in place. A relevant example is the USA with respect to research on health, aging and quality of life.

New member states – FAS should also work actively to promote cooperation with research funding agencies in the new member states (Baltic region, Eastern and Central Europe).

FAS also works actively with preparation of proposals in the “Research Links programme” which is funded by SIDA and administered by the Swedish Research Council for the purpose of promoting research collaboration between researchers in Sweden and researchers in more resource-rich developing countries in the regions of Asia and MENA (Mediterranean countries) as well as South Africa.

Horizontal objectives

National development***FINSAM***

The formulation in the Research Bill 2008 which requires research funding agencies to formalise their collaboration has resulted in the establishment of a number of cooperation groups. The cornerstone of this collaboration is the Coordination Group, a consultative group involving the heads of the research funding agencies (Swedish Research Council, FAS, Formas and VINNOVA). This group has in turn decided on a number of targeted groups in different areas of activity. As an example, FINSAM, a group for cooperation between international heads (or equivalent) was established to address the growing importance of internationalisation and the need for vigorous joint action between research agencies. There are growing demands not only for joint dissemination of information between councils, but also for the capacity to take joint initiatives around major shared programmes with an international bearing. This relates to EU collaboration as well as other mechanisms for cooperation in Europe (including the Nordic countries). However, it also applies globally (Japan, China, India and the USA), both bilaterally and multilaterally. The scope of the undertakings, the increasing need for active measures and its link to policy often increases the requirement for cooperation between research agencies.

To broaden the consultation process, an “outer ring” has been formed involving representatives of other relevant actors, among them the research foundations, research institutes, the Confederation of Swedish Enterprises, the Association of Swedish Engineering Industries, the Association of Swedish Higher Education (SUHF), the universities, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), the

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Growth Analysis, and others in a FINSAM-FORUM associated with FINSAM.

The agency's own work

FAS also contributes financially to international exchange through existing programmes, such as funding presentations by younger researchers of their work at international conferences (Travel Grants), funding extended sojourns abroad for researchers with research programmes of a high scientific calibre (International Fellowships) and giving international researchers opportunities for sojourns at a Swedish institution (Guest Researcher Grants).

International peer review through the use of foreign experts in the preparation process should continue to increase.



The Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research
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view to improving our knowledge about working life,
public health and welfare.



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