Wellbeing Growth Stockholm

Project proposal to Region Stockholm

Applicant: Center for Wellbeing, Welfare and Happiness (CWWH), Stockholm School of Economics
Research lead: Professor Micael Dahlen, Director of CWWH
Duration: 12 months | Requested funding: SEK 1,000,000

Purpose and established research platform

We propose a one-year project to measure and explain wellbeing growth in Stockholm and develop practical indicators for the implementation and monitoring of RUFS. The project directly addresses the call's ambition to monitor the region's development from a broader perspective than economic growth alone and to understand how economic growth contributes to, or is driven by, wellbeing.

The empirical platform for the project is the Wellbeing Index Stockholm framework. Developed by CWWH with Region Stockholm, Stockholm Business Region and the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce, its repeated measurements provide both an existing evidence base and a consistent method for tracking wellbeing and its distribution. Continued measurement and development of the index form the core of this proposal.

The project builds on CWWH's wellbeing growth research and its role as a consultation body to the Swedish Ministry of Finance and the Swedish Public Health Agency. Ongoing research programs such as Happy Progress Forum and the Happy Progress Monitor bring international research networks, comparative data and methods; the research program Happy Places contributes complementary research on how places shape wellbeing and attractiveness. These synergies strengthen the analysis while making use of existing research. Related Happy Progress papers are currently under review at renowned academic journals such as PNAS, Journal of Wellbeing Economics and Journal of Happiness Studies.

Research questions responding to the call

1. How does economic growth contribute to wellbeing growth, and vice versa?
We will combine existing and new index measurements with available data on gross regional product, income, employment, and population characteristics. The CWWH Wellbeing Index is currently gauging Good Life, Happiness, Meaning and Life Richness. Analysis will compare changes over time and across groups and areas, identifying potential drivers and who benefits from growth.

2. How can productivity and wellbeing reinforce each other?
We will examine how productivity relates to wellbeing and explore whether wellbeing improvements may support economic performance. International Happy Progress data will provide complementary societal comparisons (for example cross-country comparisons) and ongoing research on wellbeing effects on productivity and business outcomes will provide complementary comparisons on the organisational level. The analysis will distinguish associations from causal evidence and identify requirements for stronger future evaluation.

3. How can sustainable growth support wellbeing, productivity and competitiveness in practice?
Drawing on CWWH frameworks such as TACK - Togetherness, Agency, Coherence and Kinetics; that is also used to explain variance in the Stockholm Wellbeing Index Reports - we will relate wellbeing and economic outcomes to social and environmental indicators. This approach is informed by sustainable-development frameworks such as Doughnut Economics and Triple Bottom Line: while these frameworks articulate the social and environmental conditions for sustainable growth, Wellbeing Growth Stockholm adds a conceptual and empirical focus on how people experience their lives and how wellbeing develops in relation to economic, social and environmental conditions.

Together with Region Stockholm, we will select existing regional initiatives and assess their wellbeing effects using the index, before-and-after measurements and comparison groups where feasible. Evaluation scope will depend on available data and timing.

Contribution to RUFS objectives

The proposed framework will connect health, social cohesion, equality, climate and quality of life with economic outcomes, reflecting the RUFS vision and objectives.

Work plan and deliverables

Months 1–3: agree priority RUFS indicators, available regional data and feasible initiatives for evaluation. Refine index questions while preserving comparability with earlier measurements.

Months 4–9: continue measurement, integrate data and analyse wellbeing growth, productivity and selected initiatives.

Months 10–12: synthesise findings, develop monitoring recommendations and present results to Region Stockholm.

During the project, the Wellbeing Index Stockholm measurements will deliver continued measurements and report on the three research questions, findings from the selected evaluations, and a proposed Wellbeing Growth Stockholm framework. A concise set of indicators will connect wellbeing with economic and sustainability measures for RUFS monitoring. The project can also identify priorities for continued collaboration, future academic articles, research applications and projects.

A close collaboration with Region Stockholm during the project will enable translating findings into priorities for implementation and monitoring. The project will produce a final report and a presentation or workshop as deliverables. Findings and data will also be used for external communication and academic publications.

Budget and personnel resources

Requested funding is SEK 1,000,000 for 12 months. The core of the budget is continued measurement and development of Wellbeing Index Stockholm in collaboration with Region Stockholm, including data collection, measurement refinement and data quality. Remaining funds will support regional data integration, analysis and evaluation of existing initiatives, coordination, reporting and external communication. One of CWWH's PhD-candidates will be especially allocated to the project.

Budget proposal	SEK	COMMENTS
STOCKHOLM WELLBEING GROWTH INDEX	500 000	Continued measurements and adaptations to Region Stockholm and RUFS. Data collection and part-time research assistant.
DATA COLLECTION: ACTIVITY EVALUATION AND INTERVENTION(S)	250 000	Evaluation of existing initiatives and execution of intervention study in accordance with project scope.
PROJECT MANAGEMENT	150 000	Part-time project manager and PhD-candidate from CWWH.
KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION	100 000	Visualisation, reporting, communication of project findings.

The detailed allocation and evaluation scope will be agreed with Region Stockholm at project initiation. CWWH will additionally contribute personnel time in kind, at no cost to the project budget, including research leadership by Micael Dahlen and contributions from the center's research and project team.