In line with its strategy, the Academy of Finland is target-oriented, consistent and selective in its international activities. The Academy aims at close international funding cooperation with leading science countries both within and outside Europe, and its cooperation with emerging science countries is seen as mutually beneficial. The Academy supports and facilitates internationally high-quality research, researcher training and attractive research environments.

The Academy of Finland International Strategy runs from 2007 to 2015.

Main focuses of international activities

The Academy of Finland works to facilitate high-quality research, researcher training and the development of attractive research environments. The Academy’s international activities support and promote the implementation of the national innovation strategy.

The Academy of Finland plays a pivotal role in raising international awareness and recognition of Finnish science and high-quality research. The Academy’s international activities contribute to expertise in national and international science policy and provide responsible research funding.

The Academy is well-focused, consistent and selective in its international activities. It has close international funding cooperation with leading scientific powers both within and outside Europe. The Academy’s cooperation with emerging scientific powers is mutually beneficial. The impact of the Academy’s international activities is seen as an important opportunity for Finnish researchers to become involved in international research cooperation at the highest level.
Changes in the international operating environment

Finnish research has to compete ever harder at a time when mobility is a core value in the production and application of new research knowledge. The world’s leading scientific powers will retain their lead in the coming years. New emerging scientific powers will significantly step up their research effort, and developing countries, too, will gain an increasingly prominent role in the future. One of the tools in this bid to change the power relations within the international research system is to invest in attractive research environments.

Means

1. Evaluation and monitoring of scientific quality

The Academy of Finland ensures peer reviews by international experts as an important tool to assess the standards of Finnish science and research and to maintain its areas of strength. Peer review is recognition and feedback to the international research community that encourages efforts of Finnish researchers to compete at the international cutting edge. The Academy works actively with foreign funding bodies to further develop the peer review system in order to reliably and efficiently identify the highest-quality research projects and the most promising researchers. Peer reviews by international experts are necessary to determine the standard of Finnish research.

2. Attractive research environments

The Academy of Finland provides funding for national Centres of Excellence to support national and international networking and cooperation with top-tier groups. This improves the prospects to succeed in the international competition and secures international funding. Effective cooperation maximizes the chance of foreign researchers to work in Finland. The Academy also supports the efforts of other high-level Finnish research centres and units to strengthen their international collaboration and to develop more attractive and internationally competitive research environments. The Academy supports the participation of universities and research institutes in Strategic Centres for Science, Technology and Innovation through research funding based on high standards of scientific quality and openness and competition. The Academy also wishes to help increase international visibility to Strategic Centres in order to maintain the high quality of their work. The Academy regards the Finnish Distinctive Professor Programme (FiDiPro) as an important form of strategic cooperation with researchers and is committed to working closely with Tekes to further develop the programme. The Academy encourages infrastructure development in order to provide an important channel to international, world-leading research. The Academy supports the Finnish research teams and units to strengthen their visibility in the international research and development community and to maintain its high quality of their work.

3. Internationalisation of research programmes

The Academy works actively with foreign funding bodies to develop research programmes in close collaboration with national and international organisations. The Academy supports the efforts of other high-level Finnish research centres and units to strengthen their international collaboration and to develop more attractive and internationally competitive research environments. The Academy supports the participation of universities and research institutes in Strategic Centres for Science, Technology and Innovation through research funding based on high standards of scientific quality and openness and competition. The Academy also wishes to help increase international visibility to Strategic Centres in order to maintain the high quality of their work.

4. Internationalisation of the research career

The Academy of Finland works closely with universities to promote the networking and collaboration of doctoral programmes in Finland and other countries. The Academy considers it important that doctoral programmes provide the skills and competencies that are needed for international research collaboration and for researchers to work abroad. The Academy promotes researchers mobility in various ways as part of a consistent research career path. Special attention is given to the postdoctoral stage. To this end the Academy shall develop a mobility programme. Furthermore, the Academy works actively to encourage mobility and to maintain the high quality of their work.

5. Visibility of science

The Academy of Finland is an active science policy expert and aims to increase international awareness of science as well as the research it funds. The Academy supports the work done by Finnish researchers abroad and their involvement in joint international projects. The Academy contributes to the ERA-EDTA, the ERA-Global and several other international programmes.

6. The Academy’s role in the science policy field

In the context of its international activities, the Academy of Finland is committed to developing strategic partnerships with foreign funding organisations. The Academy shall continue to strengthen its active role as a driver of EU research and development and as a forum for international cooperation with major scientific powers outside Europe. The Academy’s international activities, its strategic choices and international and national collaboration also open up opportunities for researchers to engage in joint international projects, enhance the impact of Finland’s international activities and bolster the competitiveness of Finnish research on a Nordic, European and global level. The Academy shall continue to develop its international activities and to actually evaluate the outcomes, successes and impact of those activities. The Academy’s Research Counsels make the necessary preparations and strategic decisions concerning their international activities.