



# **Research Council of Finland Equality and Nondiscrimination Plan 2026-2028**

**Valid from 8 April 2026 to 30 April 2028**



**Research Council of Finland**

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# 1. Abstract

The Research Council of Finland Equality and Nondiscrimination Plan 2026–2028 has been prepared to contribute to meeting the objectives of the RCF strategy, values and performance management, as well as the objectives of the education administration.

**Table 1. Summary of the plan’s measures and parties responsible. The measures are described in more detail in Chapter 4.**

Measure	Responsible party	Timeline
1 Enhancing impact of equality and nondiscrimination work with communication	Impact and Communications Group, Science Policy and International Affairs Group	2026–2028
2 Promoting equality and nondiscrimination in funded projects	Decision-Making and Application Support Group, subprocess coordinators	2026–2028
3 Enhancing diversity of experts involved in review	Scientific Evaluation and Programme and Research Infrastructure Application Groups, subprocess coordinators	2026–2028
4 Establishing practices for equality and nondiscrimination impact assessment in introduction and monitoring of new funding schemes or research funding systems	Groups of science policy and international affairs, decision-making and application support, as well as scientific evaluation according to the entity to be assessed, as well as the Equality and Nondiscrimination Working Group	2027–2028
5 Developing practices and operating culture that support staff diversity	Administration Group and Equality and Nondiscrimination Working Group	2026–2027
6 Staff diversity through recruitment	Administration Group and recruiting supervisors, Impact Work and Communications Group (communications)	2026–2028
7 Gender and nondiscrimination impact assessment related to pay and remuneration	Administration Group, as well as Pay Assessment and Development Group	2027–2028

The annual planning guidelines ensure that the measures are included in the operational planning of units and groups. In addition, it is important to link the implementation of the measures to the strategic priorities of the RCF, as part of the implementation of the strategy.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1. Background: RCF strategy, values and performance agreement

The Research Council of Finland is committed, in line with its strategy and values, to promoting equality and nondiscrimination. The RCF strategy also includes the objective of developing the diversity of our work community. The RCF's efforts to promote equality and nondiscrimination aim at incorporating them as an integral part of the RCF's day-to-day operations, core processes and their follow-up.

The administrative branch of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture constitutes the education administration that creates preconditions for the growth of the Finnish economy, competitiveness and wellbeing through education, creativity, innovations and competence. The operations of the education administration strengthen equality and nondiscrimination in compliance with the guidelines of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman and the Ombudsman for Equality.

The performance agreement between the RCF and the Ministry contains entries on the promotion of equality, nondiscrimination and cultural diversity.

The performance agreement for 2026 is used to monitor the percentage of women in expert roles in the RCF's peer reviews and the success of women in the RCF's funding calls. Another measure is monitoring personnel experience of the realisation of equality and nondiscrimination. Indicators of the performance agreement are to be developed during the plan period.

As an employer, the RCF works consistently to promote equality and nondiscrimination among its employees, and in its agency role, it ensures that the principles of equality and nondiscrimination cut across its research funding and other operations. One of the RCF's key science policy objectives is through its decision-making on research funding to dismantle gender imbalance in research.

The RCF has prepared this Equality and Nondiscrimination Plan in accordance with its obligations under the Act on Equality between Women and Men (hereafter the Equality Act) and the Non-Discrimination Act. The plan describes the measures applied by the RCF to promote gender equality and nondiscrimination in all its operations. The plan also considers the dimensions of diversity in both research funding and personnel.

## 2.2. Purpose and scope

During the plan period, the focus is still on integrating the equality and nondiscrimination perspective more strongly into the activities of the RCF and promoting the practices that support this mainstreaming process.

**The Equality Act** is intended to prevent gender discrimination, promote equality between women and men and, to this end, improve the position of women especially in the workplace. Furthermore, the purpose of the act is to prevent discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression.

**The Non-Discrimination Act** prohibits all kinds of discrimination based on age, origin, nationality, sexual orientation, language, religion, belief, opinion, political activity, trade union activity, family relationships, state of health, disability, or other personal characteristics. The Act requires that active measures be taken to promote nondiscrimination. Authorities and employers are furthermore required to make due and appropriate adjustments to ensure the nondiscrimination of persons with disabilities.

The plan applies to all RCF actors, both the Administration Office and its employees and scientific councils.

The plan is divided into two entities concerning operational equality and nondiscrimination, i.e. the implementation of research funding and the office staff.

The focus of the plan is on measures and their follow-up. The equality and nondiscrimination measures are also described in the tables attached to the plan.

The plan also includes a cultural diversity plan required in the performance agreement between the RCF and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

The update of the Equality and Nondiscrimination Plan was prepared by the RCF Equality and Nondiscrimination Working Group (ENDWG). The update of the plan has been discussed in the evening session of the RCF Board, the cooperation group for research funding activities, the staff workshop, the cooperation group and the management group. In addition, the Union of Research Professionals and Sivista have been consulted as stakeholders in connection with the update.

M365 Copilot Chat Artificial Intelligence has been utilised in preparing the plan, such as summarising the text (chapter 3) and brainstorming the content.

### 3. Current state

The Research Council of Finland is committed to the long-term mainstreaming of equality and nondiscrimination. At the RCF, mainstreaming equality and nondiscrimination means that equality and nondiscrimination perspectives are systematically integrated into all operations, in terms of both research funding and personnel. In practice, this is reflected in research funding practices and application evaluation, diversity development of the evaluation panels and guidelines, as well as solutions that support equality and nondiscrimination in HR management, recruitment and operating culture.

The previous Equality and Nondiscrimination Plan included packages of measures concerning both research funding and personnel, related to data collection, as well as communication and training. The implementation of the related measures is assessed in the chapters on research funding and personnel.

Equality and nondiscrimination work is a long-term activity. The need for similar measures may be reviewed over time, depending on whether the desired target state has been reached. Therefore, some of the objectives of the previous plan are also presented for this plan period.

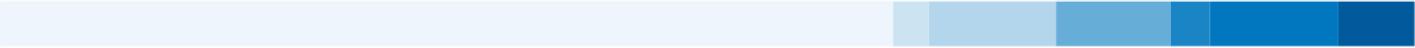
#### 3.1. Current state of research funding

In RCF research funding, gender equality and nondiscrimination are overall well realised. However, the differences between research fields remain significant. The gender imbalance in applicant pools and the situation in research organisations are also reflected in the funded projects and the level of funding, especially in fields where women or men are clearly in the minority.

The RCF's opportunities to influence the promotion of equality and nondiscrimination are particularly targeted at the principles and evaluation practices of research funding, the terms and conditions of funding schemes, the diversity of panels and gender and nondiscrimination impact assessments in key research funding development projects.

##### *Gender distribution among applicants and across research fields*

Gender distribution by research field is strongly reflected in research funding applicant pools. The proportion of female applicants in the fields of natural sciences and engineering has not increased in recent years. For example, in 2025, in RCF projects in the fields in question, 22% of the applicants and 21% of the funded applicants were women. The opposite trend can be observed in the fields of social sciences and humanities research, where the proportion of female applicants in



RCF projects increased to 57%, and the proportion of funded female researchers to 61%. The figures in Appendix 2 show the gender distribution among the winter call applicants and funded researchers in 2021–2025 in more detail.

The RCF has traditionally only had an indirect influence on the structure of the applicant pool, as the gender distribution reflects the broader structure of the research system and disciplines. The opportunities to influence are particularly related to the practices and criteria of applying for and evaluating research funding, as well as communication on equal research career practices.

#### *Academy Professors - positive development in the proportion of women*

In Academy Professor calls, the gender imbalance has been evident for a long time, but the proportion of women has clearly increased in recent years. In the 2025 call, 34% of applicants and 47% of funded researchers were women. This is a significant development compared to 2020, when the proportion of women was 27% of the applicants and 20% of those funded.

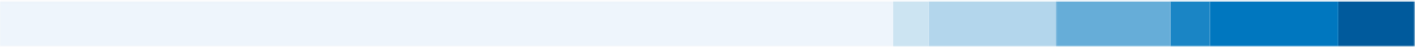
However, the number of women as applicants and recipients of Academy Professor funding has not increased at the same rate as in other funding schemes, even though there are a large number of women in some sectors as both applicants and recipients of funding. This can be observed, for example, in the fields of social sciences and humanities, in Academy Research Fellowship and Academy Project applications.

The imbalance in the proportion of women among Academy Professor funding applicants and funding recipients reflects the glass ceiling effect of academic careers and structural differences between disciplines, as well as the fact that progress in equality remains slow and uneven.

#### *Academy Projects and research groups*

In Academy Projects, the gender distribution varies from sector to sector. In 2026, an average of 41% of all applicants for Academy Projects and 40% of those funded were women. In the fields of natural sciences and engineering, women are a clear minority, while in the social sciences and humanities, as well as biosciences, health and environmental research, the gender distribution is within 40–60%. In addition, gender differences are evident in role allocation within research groups: Women often occupy different roles than men, reflecting broader career structures within disciplines. These factors affect both funding opportunities and the progress of research careers.

#### *International applicants and equality*



The number of applicants and funded applicants with a foreign background has increased, especially in the funding of Academy Research Fellowships in natural sciences and engineering. In Academy Projects, however, the same growth is not as evident. The Academy Research Fellowships are attractive to international researchers. The figures in Appendix 3 show the distribution of non-Finnish citizens among winter call applicants and funded researchers in 2023–2025 in more detail.

#### *Diversity of reviewers*

The RCF has made sustained efforts to enhance the diversity of experts used in the review of applications, especially from the gender perspective. The RCF joined the AcademiaNet network already in 2013, and the network's database will continue to be used in the recruitment of reviewers to ensure better representation of female experts.

Gender balance in review panels has been developed for years, and the selection of experts pays attention to as broad and equal a representation as possible. Despite this, recruiting female experts for panels is more challenging in some disciplines. In 2026, the proportion of women among all reviewers was 43%. In the 2020s, the proportion of women among reviewers has varied between 32% and 43%. However, the proportion of women varies greatly from panel to panel. For example, the proportion of women in the 2026 winter call panels varied between 16% and 79%.

A large number of reviewers are from background organisations located in Europe, such as the UK, Germany, Sweden, Italy or Denmark. Despite this, the reviewer group is more diverse in its background than the mere location of the organisations suggests. Practical factors, such as considering time zones, also affect the diversity of review panels and the recruitment of reviewers.

The RCF will continue its work to enhance the diversity in review panels, from the perspective of both gender and other background factors and will further develop ways in which the recruitment of reviewers can support the equality and responsibility of research funding.

#### *Responsible researcher evaluation*

Responsible researcher evaluation serves as a tool for embedding equality and nondiscrimination perspectives in the RCF funding decisions and review processes. The RCF promotes responsible researcher evaluation as part of its strategic objective of strengthening the Finnish scientific community as a pioneer in responsible science. The principles of responsible researcher evaluation by the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, as well as the objectives of the San Francisco Declaration of Research



Assessment (DORA) are incorporated in the development of RCF review practices.

The RCF actively participates in national and international networks that promote equality, diversity and transparency in evaluation. In 2025–2028, a representative of the RCF will work in the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies' steering group for responsible researcher evaluation. In addition, the RCF is a member of two CoARA working groups that develop the responsibility of the evaluation practices of research funders and the consideration of multilingualism. Finland also has an active national chapter of CoARA, which contributes to enhancing the formation of national consensus in the Finnish scientific community. The National Chapter has 47 members, including the RCF.

The RCF also participates in the Research Culture work of Science Europe, which contributes to building a responsible, equal and inclusive research environment.

### **3.1.1. Assessment of implementation of measures concerning research funding in previous period and conclusions for the future**

#### **Communication and training (research funding)**

The RCF Equality and Nondiscrimination Plan and current measures have been communicated on the RCF's external website and intranet. With regard to Academy Research Fellowship and Academy Project funding decisions, the success of female applicants in the RCF funding calls has been communicated.

The RCF has updated the guidelines for handling inappropriate treatment and incidents of harassment occurring on social media and other channels.

#### **Work-life balance (research funding)**

The RCF has continued practices that support work-life balance in research funding. Career breaks, such as family leave, are considered in the assessment, and they should not have a negative impact on the position of the applicant. The criteria for research funding emphasise the transparency of decision-making and gender equality, especially with regard to family leaves.

Under the standard terms of funding, the funding period may be extended for family leaves, military or non-military service and other special reasons (e.g. long-term illness). In the Academy Research Fellowship calls, career breaks are considered when assessing eligibility.

During the planning period 2024–2026, efforts have been made to clarify the consideration of foreign applicants' family leaves and other career breaks in eligibility, as the practices vary between countries.

## Gender and nondiscrimination impact assessment

The RCF has continued the gender and nondiscrimination impact assessment, in connection with the development of funding schemes. In the preparation of the Profi 9 funding instrument, nondiscrimination perspectives have been examined, especially from the perspective of recruiting researchers working abroad, in cooperation with universities and lawyers. In addition, the RCF has issued a statement on the reform of the Aliens Act, emphasising the need to strengthen Finland's attractiveness for international researchers and RDI professionals.

## Responsible science and evaluation

Equality and nondiscrimination perspectives have been strengthened in the review work. The review forms have been revised so that equality and nondiscrimination are assessed as part of the feasibility of the project and can thus affect the final rating. In addition, the review principles have been updated to meet these objectives and to support review activities.

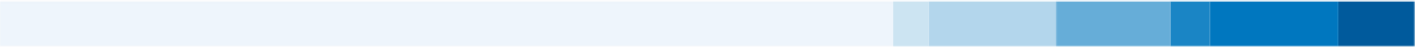
In 2024–2026, the RCF has been actively involved in international discussions on responsible researcher evaluation (CoARA working groups) and in the exchange of information on good practices with other funders. The CoARA working group "Improving practices in the assessment of research proposals" is set to publish a report in 2026 containing perspectives related to diversity and equality in evaluation. In addition, the CoARA multilingualism working group has published the report [Implementation proposal for language-aware assessments](#). In the future, the RCF will examine how international recommendations on the multilingual nature of research and researcher evaluation can be considered in evaluation activities.

## 3.2. Current state of personnel

The proportion of women among RCF employees has been higher than that of men for a long time. At the end of 2025, men accounted for 34% of RCF personnel, which was somewhat higher than in previous years. The average age of employees has increased in recent years (52.3) due to, for example, the low number of new recruitments.

The decrease in the number of employees, due to the economic situation, and the low number of recruitments affect the staff wellbeing at work, competence needs and possibly also their experiences of equality and nondiscrimination. The opportunities for influencing staff diversity through recruitments are limited.

However, the results of the 2025 personnel survey were at a good level, as were experiences of the realisation of equality and nondiscrimination (3.66 on a scale of 1–4, which is considered a top result in the survey).



In connection with the personnel survey in 2025, an equality survey was piloted, which provided information on employees' experiences of equality, categorised by grounds of discrimination, to serve as a basis for the plan. The pay survey (1/2026) examined the realisation of equality and nondiscrimination in pay, in more detail. Both surveys showed that employees perceive challenges in pay equality after the organisational reform implemented in 2024. In the reform, many roles and their positioning, as well as staff placement within the organisation, changed.

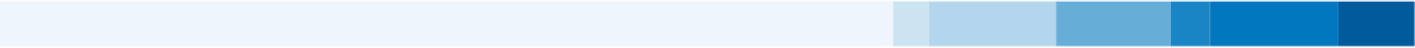
Minor differences were observed in the pay survey, which are mainly explained by differences in experience in the personnel group in question. The most comparable groups at the RCF are expert levels (job grade levels 89 and 90) with sufficient numbers of both genders. Here, the equal pay index is also close to 100.

Experiences of harassment and inappropriate treatment are monitored through personnel survey questions. Of the respondents, 4% had experienced inappropriate treatment, and the number of these experiences has decreased from previous years' surveys. In 2025, the RCF updated its guidelines for dealing with inappropriate treatment situations and organised a staff meeting where the guidelines were reviewed. According to the results of the 2025 equality survey, there were no experiences of discrimination.

In a staff workshop surveying the equality and nondiscrimination situation and activities of the RCF, on 9 March 2026, the personnel expressed their appreciation for the fact that the RCF has taken measures to enhance equality and nondiscrimination, and that equality planning and the practical implementation of the measures have become part of the RCF's standard operations. In particular, the RCF's family-friendliness and flexible practices received praise. On the other hand, it was noted that RCF employees are a more diverse group than what can be seen outside, and that enhancing diversity requires active measures, such as activating the RCF's diversity network.

The staff highlighted the following development targets: The need for concrete equality measures and assessment, for example when developing pay, the consideration of different age groups and their life situations and care responsibilities, as well as accessibility in premises and activities.

With regard to several grounds for discrimination under the Equality Act and the Non-Discrimination Act (origin and nationality, state of health or disability, religion and belief, opinion and political activities, sexual orientation and gender identity), the RCF staff do not have a strong understanding of how equality is realised. In the personnel survey, a large proportion of the respondents have chosen the option "cannot say", which indicates that the themes are either considered



invisible in everyday work or that they cannot be assessed based on the employees' own observations.

It is probable that the diversity related to these background factors (origin and nationality, state of health or disability, religion and belief, opinion and political activity, sexual orientation and gender identity) is not clearly visible or actively discussed. This may mean, for example, that:

- the employees do not recognise whether people in the work community belong to the aforementioned minority groups
- experiences are not openly shared because the themes involve protection of privacy or other sensitivities for open discussion
- there have been no visible nondiscrimination issues in the work community – or they are not recognised
- the personnel do not have the capacity to assess the realisation of equality from the perspective of these criteria.

For the assessment of the current state, this lack of information is an essential observation. This does not mean that equality in these areas is automatically realised well or poorly. Instead, means are needed to make these themes more visible, to increase awareness and to strengthen trust that experiences can be shared safely.

### **3.2.1. Assessment of implementation of measures concerning personnel in previous period and conclusions for the future**

During the previous period, active measures have been taken to promote equality and nondiscrimination. These measures are described below. Given the long-term nature of the work, it is necessary to continue the activities on data collection, communication and training, as well as some other measures concerning staff, with a slight update.

#### **Systematic data collection (staff)**

The RCF has developed the coordination of data collection and reporting on equality and nondiscrimination, so that data on both research funding and staff are consistently reported, for example, in the annual report.

The follow-up of staff nondiscrimination is carried out as a standard ongoing practice, through the annual personnel survey and the biannual equality and nondiscrimination survey.

In 2025, the RCF participated in the development of the central government's joint diversity survey. The survey will be launched in 2027. The central government's joint survey will strengthen the systematic monitoring of staff equality and nondiscrimination.

## **Communication and training (staff)**

During the plan period, the RCF has strengthened communication and training related to equality, nondiscrimination and diversity. In spring 2024, the safer space principles were drawn up together with the staff, and they have been introduced in RCF internal and external operations. Principle-related training, especially the handling of challenging interactive situations, was organised at the same time.

Equality themes have also been prominently highlighted as part of the employer image work. For the first time, the RCF participated in Helsinki Pride in 2024, communicated actively about the participation and put up a rainbow flag in its premises.

In 2024, RCF staff set up a diversity network to provide a low-threshold space for diversity and promote a safe work community.

The planning of diversity and nondiscrimination training is included in the competence development plan for 2025–2026. The aim is to implement the trainings from 2026 onwards, making use of the central government's shared e-learning tool eOppiva, among other things. In addition, the RCF has participated in the preparation of the government's shared diversity guidance material.

Nondiscrimination themes have also been included in the RCF guidelines on civil servant ethics, which are available on the intranet.

## **Nondiscrimination in personnel planning, recruitment and pay**

The RCF has strengthened the nondiscrimination and diversity perspective in personnel planning and recruitment, in accordance with its strategy. Since 2022, the diversity statement has been used in job advertisements to encourage applicants of various backgrounds.

In 2025, only a small number of external recruitments were carried out due to the economic situation, but a vacancy opened at year-end tested a lighter language proficiency requirement for the position of a science adviser, to promote diversity. The RCF has also granted a service position to a non-military service person in 2024–2025.

The RCF has adopted 'safer space principles', which support inclusive interaction in the daily work of both staff and supervisors. Discussion and training on the principles will continue in the supervisor forum.

The RCF has been actively involved in the diversity work of the central government personnel strategy and participated in the activities of the central government's shared diversity network in 2025–2026. The task of the network is to support the diversity work of the agencies. The RCF chaired the network, in 2025. In the future, the support material for diversity work produced by the network will be used especially in the development of supervisory work.

## 4. Objectives and measures for 2026–2028 plan period

The aim combining the various measures of the plan period is to make the measures promoting nondiscrimination and diversity more evident and visible. An assessment of the current state related to the nondiscrimination criteria has been carried out, as a basis for the measures of this plan, and systematic assessment and monitoring of the criteria will be continued. The tables in Appendices 1 (research funding) and 4 (personnel) contain an assessment of the current state and measures for each criterion, considering information obtained from the RCF's research funding data dashboard, personnel surveys, workshops and other sources.

The annual planning guidelines ensure that the measures are included in the operational planning of units and groups. In addition, it is important to link the implementation of the measures to the strategic priorities of the RCF, as part of the implementation of the strategy.

During the plan period 2026–2028, the RCF aims to increase dialogue with the researchers and research organisations it funds, as well as with other authorities and NGOs. In addition, the RCF actively participates in cooperation between actors in education administration to promote operational equality and nondiscrimination, as well as in the implementation of the central government personnel strategy, for example in the diversity network.

### 4.1. Research funding objectives and measures

#### Measure 1: Enhancing effectiveness of equality and nondiscrimination work through communication and public affairs

The equality and nondiscrimination perspectives and cultural diversity are considered in the RCF's external and internal communications and public affairs work. Contents on equality and nondiscrimination are updated on the RCF website.

Our practices promoting equality and nondiscrimination, as well as the research we fund and the promotion of equality and nondiscrimination in it are communicated, considering researchers, research groups, topics and materials.

Indicators measuring the RCF's operations are developed and updated to describe equality and nondiscrimination, as well as cultural diversity.

**Responsible party:** Impact and Communications Group, Science Policy and International Affairs Group

**Timeline:** 2026–2028

**Monitoring and indicator:** Annual plans for communication and public affairs work. Indicators in the performance agreement have been developed in accordance with the measure. A qualitative assessment of the integration of equality and nondiscrimination perspectives, as well as cultural diversity, in communications and public affairs.

## **Measure 2: Promoting equality and nondiscrimination in funded projects**

The impact of the research funding decision criteria, revised in 2025, on applicants and funded researchers and projects is strengthened, monitored and evaluated. The new criteria consider the promotion of equality and nondiscrimination at three levels:

- 1) The applicant must describe in the application how the project promotes equality and nondiscrimination
- 2) The actions described are part of the qualitative assessment of the application
- 3) In a decision-making situation, in the case of applications of equal merit, priority will be given to the application that is considered to promote the reduction of gender segregation in research and the scientific community, to strengthen the diversity of research or the scientific community, or to promote sustainable development.

Guidelines for preparing applications are clarified. The guidelines will pay particular attention to applicants with a foreign background.

The equality and nondiscrimination competence of the institutions making funding decisions and, in particular, their chairpersons is strengthened.

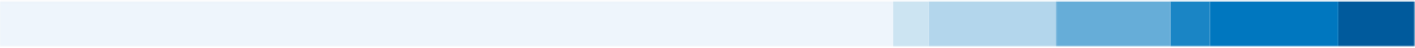
The standard funding terms are reviewed, from an equality and nondiscrimination perspective, with project administration staff.

**Responsible party:** Decision-Making and Application Support Group, Funding Application Unit Subprocess Coordinators, Financial Group for standard terms

**Timeline:** 2026–2028

**Monitoring and indicator:** The application instructions are updated. Operating methods are prepared for monitoring the consideration of equality and nondiscrimination in the research funding decision criteria. Induction is prepared and offered to the chairpersons of the institutions.

## **Measure 3: Enhancing diversity of experts involved in review**



A situational picture of diversity is compiled for reviewers and practices concerning evaluation activities (based on survey data and internal discussions within the agency).

The competence of application and panel officers (science advisers) and reviewers, especially panel chairs, in the consideration of equality, nondiscrimination and diversity in evaluation activities is strengthened.

The review guidelines and the practices for inviting reviewers are updated, considering diversity, as well as international and national recommendations for responsible researcher evaluation.

**Responsible party:** Scientific Evaluation and Programme and Research Infrastructure Application Groups, subprocess coordinators

**Timeline:** 2026–2028

**Monitoring and indicator:** Review guidelines are updated. Inductions are completed.

#### **Measure 4: Establishing practices for equality and nondiscrimination impact assessment in introduction and monitoring of new funding schemes or research funding systems**

Three impact assessments will be carried out during the planning period:

- Ex-post evaluation of Academy Research Fellowship reform 2027
- Ex-ante assessment of AHA2028 project 2027
- Ex-ante assessment of government grant information system and review application
- All new calls: A policy/framework for impact assessment is created

Opportunities for promoting equality and nondiscrimination through targeted calls or special conditions in certain calls are investigated (prerequisites concerning research groups, topics, etc.).

**Responsible party:** Groups of science policy and international affairs, decision-making and application support, as well as scientific evaluation according to the entity to be assessed, as well as the Equality and Nondiscrimination Working Group

**Timeline:** 2027–2028

**Monitoring and indicator:** Practice for equality and nondiscrimination impact assessment is created and introduced.

## 4.2. Personnel objectives and measures

### Measure 5: Developing practices and operating culture that support staff diversity

The staff's competence and understanding of equality and cultural diversity is increased through training and active internal communication.

All staff required to complete eOppiva training: [Sukupuolten tasa-arvo ja yhdenvertaisuus - Miksi ja miten?](#) (Gender equality and nondiscrimination - Why and how?, in Finnish).

An in-depth training and joint discussion on issues related to RCF operations is organised.

Improving the RCF facilities and operating methods by developing accessibility, considering, for example, hearing accessibility.

**Responsible party:** Administration Group and Equality and Nondiscrimination Working Group (ENDWG)

**Timeline:** Staff training autumn 2026, other activities continue in 2027

**Monitoring and indicator:** The number of people who have completed the training in eOppiva, as well as the results of the personnel survey (annually) and the equality survey (every two years) measuring staff equality and nondiscrimination are monitored.

### Measure 6: Staff diversity through recruitment

The recruitment practices and opportunities for increasing staff diversity through recruitment are reviewed. In the case of equal applicants, the possibility of positive action (gender or various nondiscrimination perspectives) is utilised in recruitment.

The preconditions for language proficiency are considered on a task-specific basis, and the RCF's multilingualism practices are developed.

Diversity is considered in recruitment communications.

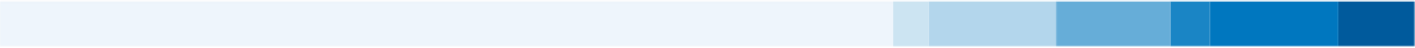
Recruitment practices will be further developed through the recruitment experiences gained.

**Responsible party:** Administration Group and recruiting supervisors, Impact Work and Communications Group with regard to communications

**Timeline:** 2026-2028

**Monitoring and indicator:** The impact of recruitments is monitored as part of RCF personnel reporting.

### Measure 7: Gender and nondiscrimination impact assessment related to pay and remuneration



A gender and nondiscrimination impact assessment related to pay and remuneration development measures is carried out, and the impact of the measures will be monitored as part of the pay survey.

The measures required by the Pay Transparency Directive are implemented.

**Responsible party:** Administration Group, as well as Pay Assessment and Development Group

**Timeline:** 2027-2028

**Monitoring and indicator:** Pay survey and equal pay indexes, staff pay statistics

### **4.3. Cultural diversity plan**

Cultural diversity is promoted through staff training, communications and measures concerning the evaluation and decision-making of the research funding process. The measures are described in more detail in Chapter 4.

## 5. Monitoring and reporting

The objectives, measures and responsible parties included in the plan are reviewed together with the personnel. The measures are included in the units' annual plans, and supervisors are urged to pay attention to the objectives and measures in their management. The RCF's management is committed to implementing the Equality and Nondiscrimination Plan. The equality and non-discrimination measures are discussed regularly in the RCF's management team.

The Equality and Nondiscrimination Working Group (ENDWG) monitors implementation of the measures set out in the plan on a regular basis and supports the whole RCF organisation in its efforts to implement the measures. The working group reviews the outcomes and effectiveness of the measures annually, updates the plan as necessary and defines the objectives for the year ahead.

Equality and nondiscrimination surveys, as well as pay surveys, are carried out every other year. The RCF implements the equality survey for its staff every two years. Annual data on both the staff and research funding, such as performance agreement indicators, are reported in the annual report.

ENDWG reports on progress and new objectives of equality and nondiscrimination efforts to the RCF's management team, cooperation team and to the RCF Board. ENDWG will also communicate the measures on the intranet and on the external website(s), as well as at staff events.

The Equality and Nondiscrimination Plan is posted on the RCF's intranet and website. The plan will be translated into Swedish and English.

# Appendices

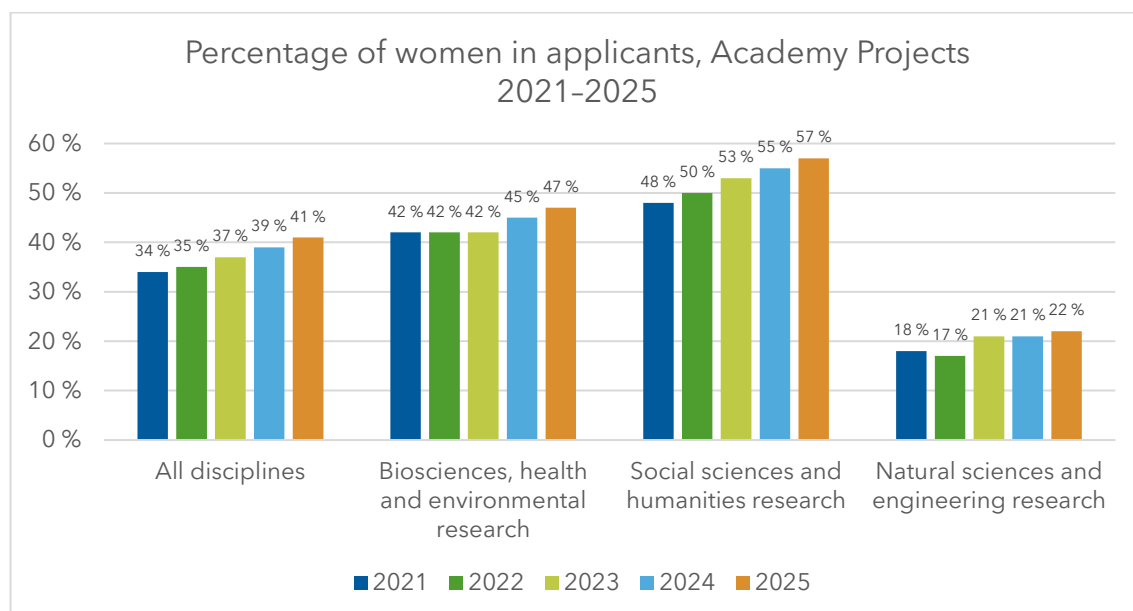
## Appendix 1. Assessment of current state of research funding and proposed measures

Equality and nondiscrimination in research funding		
Criteria	Assessment of the current state	Proposed measures
<b>Equality</b>		
<b>Gender</b>	Gender segregation in research funding: The average proportion of women in the natural sciences and engineering sectors is low, while the proportion of men in some social sciences and humanities sectors is low. The proportion of women among reviewers is clearly lower.	Efforts will be made to increase applicants' awareness and responsibility for a balanced gender distribution of research groups by requiring that the matter be described in the application. The equality and nondiscrimination perspectives of research, its methods and the composition of the research group will be strongly highlighted in the review and decision-making criteria. The policies and criteria will be clearly and transparently explained in the call for applications.  Included in measure 2.
<b>Gender identity</b>	In RCF's current online services, three options are available: Female/Male/Other or Prefer not to say.	Four gender categories will be created in the new application and review information systems: Female, Male, Other, Prefer not to say.  Related to measure 4.
<b>Nondiscrimination</b>		
<b>Age</b>	Research funding has been examined in connection with different career stages and academic age. In the fields of natural sciences and engineering, applicants and funding recipients are, on average, younger than in other fields.  Efforts have been made to attract experts of different ages and career stages as reviewers.	The review work aims to increase awareness on the diversity of experts and to pay attention to this in the recruitment of reviewers.  Included in measure 3.

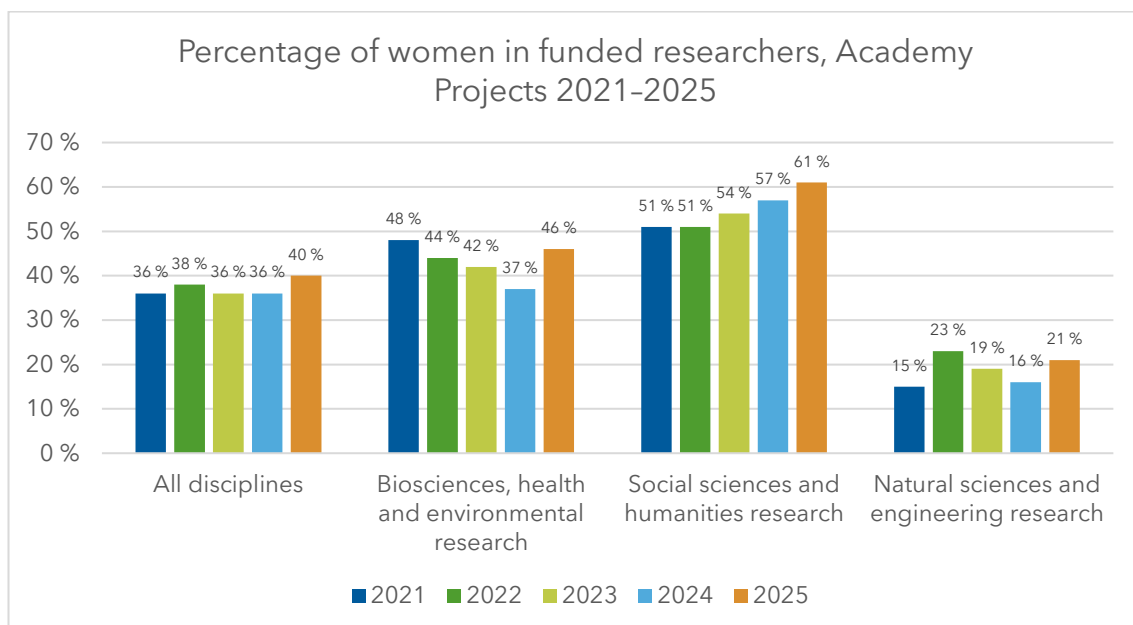
<b>Origin or nationality</b>	A large proportion of researchers applying for funding are non-Finnish nationals. In addition, the review of funding application is mainly carried out by international experts.	Particular attention will be paid to applicants with a foreign background in the application instructions.  Included in measure 2.  The review work aims to increase awareness on the diversity of experts and to pay attention to this in the recruitment of reviewers.  Included in measure 3.
<b>Language</b>	In the review of applications, the working language is English. In the review, the language skills of experts have been useful (e.g. with regard to publications in different languages).  The working language of the scientific councils is Finnish. However, multilingualism has been partially implemented. An interpreter service has been provided if necessary, and the materials have been translated into English.	The review work aims to increase awareness on the diversity of experts and to pay attention to this in the recruitment of reviewers.  The aim is to ensure that the linguistic special needs of the reviewers are considered in the arrangements for the panel meeting.  Included in measure 3.
<b>Religion and beliefs</b>	The safer space principles are included in the panel work guidelines. The needs of breaks related to various personal reasons have been considered in panel work.	The aim is to ensure that any special needs of the reviewers are considered in the arrangements for panel meetings.  Included in measure 3.
<b>Opinion, political and trade union activities</b>	The safer space principles are included in the panel work guidelines.	No need for action.
<b>Family relations</b>	The RCF has previously abandoned the mobility requirement related to family and care responsibilities. The RCF advises reviewers on taking family leaves and career breaks into account in the review.	In accordance with the standard terms, it will be ensured that the extensions of the funding period due to family leave are consistently successful.  Included in measure 2.

<b>State of health and disability</b>	<p>The needs of breaks related to various personal reasons will be considered in panel work.</p> <p>“VA-digi” accessibility assessment completed (by the State Treasury).</p>	<p>The aim is to ensure that any special needs of the reviewers are considered in the arrangements for panel meetings.</p> <p>Included in measure 3.</p> <p>The RCF guidelines and external events will be implemented in an accessible manner.</p> <p>Included in measure 1.</p>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<p>The safer space principles are in use in the RCF's external events.</p>	<p>No need for action.</p>

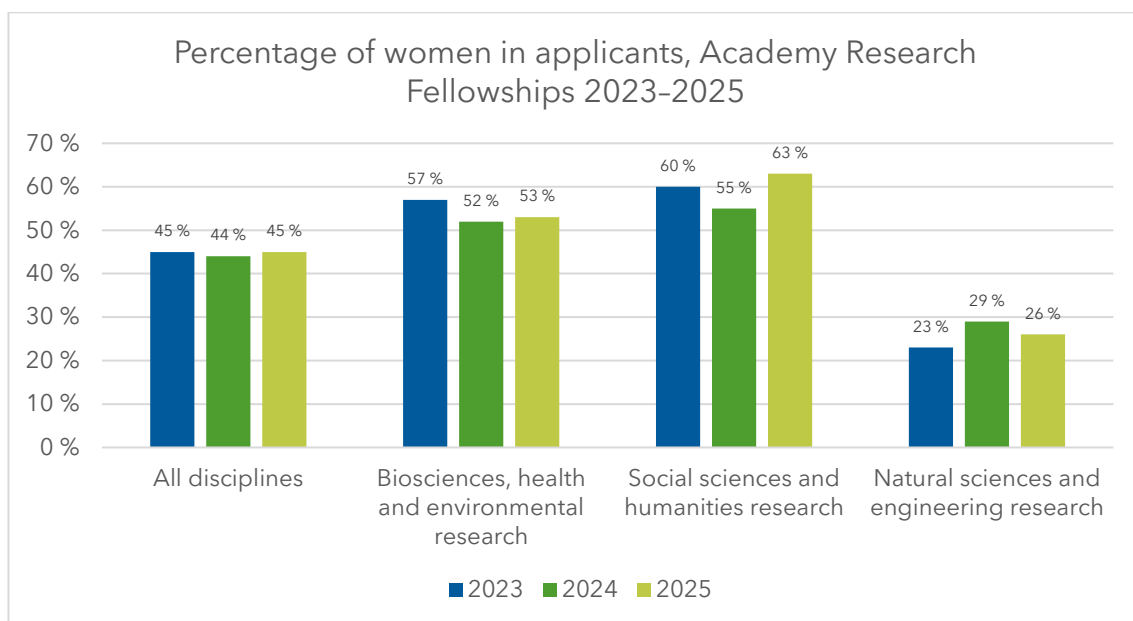
## Appendix 2. Winter call data, gender of applicants and funded researchers, Figures 1-4, source RCF data dashboard Sep 2025



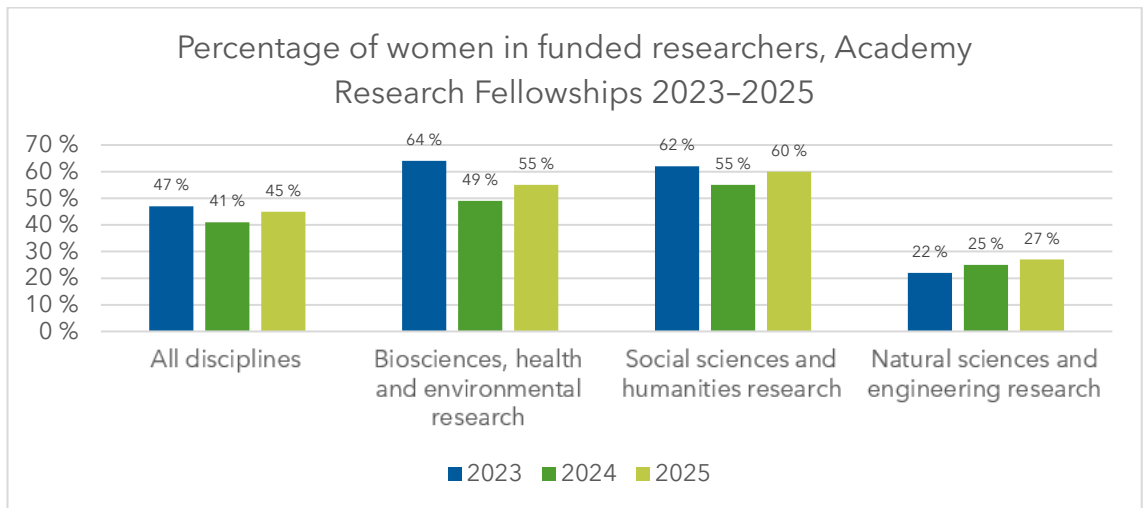
**Figure 1. Percentage of women in applicants, Academy Project calls 2021-2025.**



**Figure 2. Percentage of women in funded researchers, Academy Projects, funding decisions 2021-2025.**

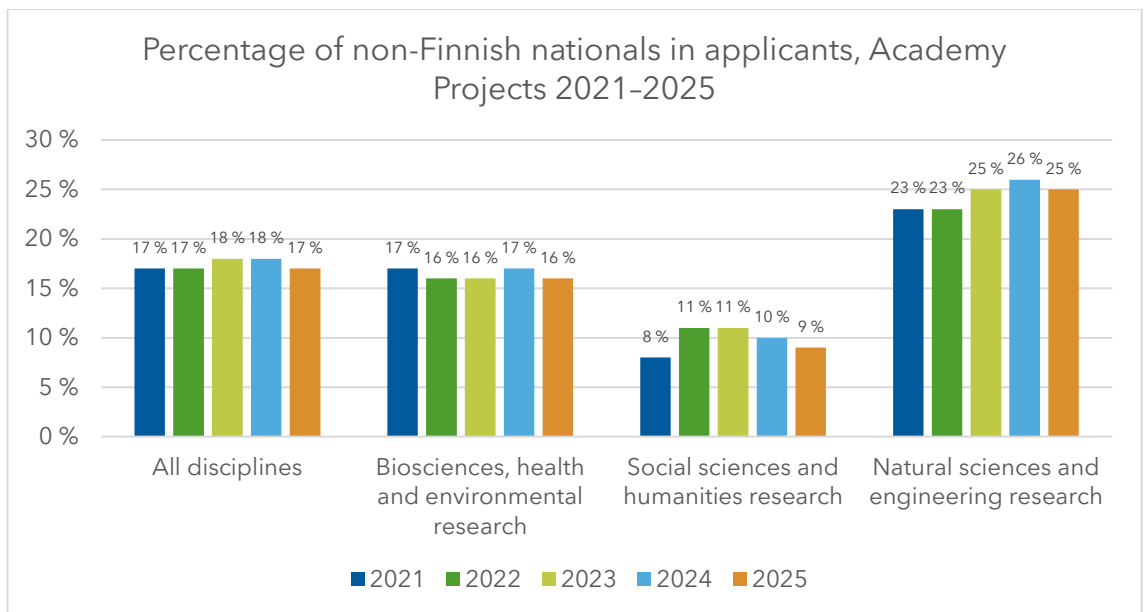


**Figure 3. Percentage of women in applicants, Academy Research Fellowship calls 2023-2025.**

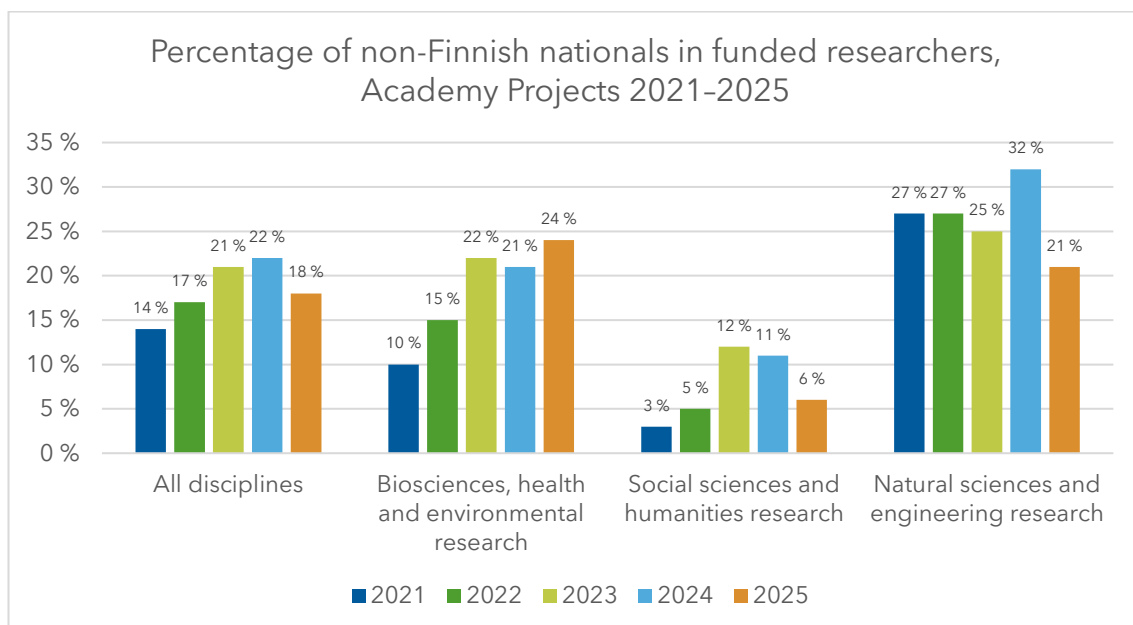


**Figure 4. Percentage of women in funded researchers, Academy Research Fellowships, funding decisions for 2023-2025.**

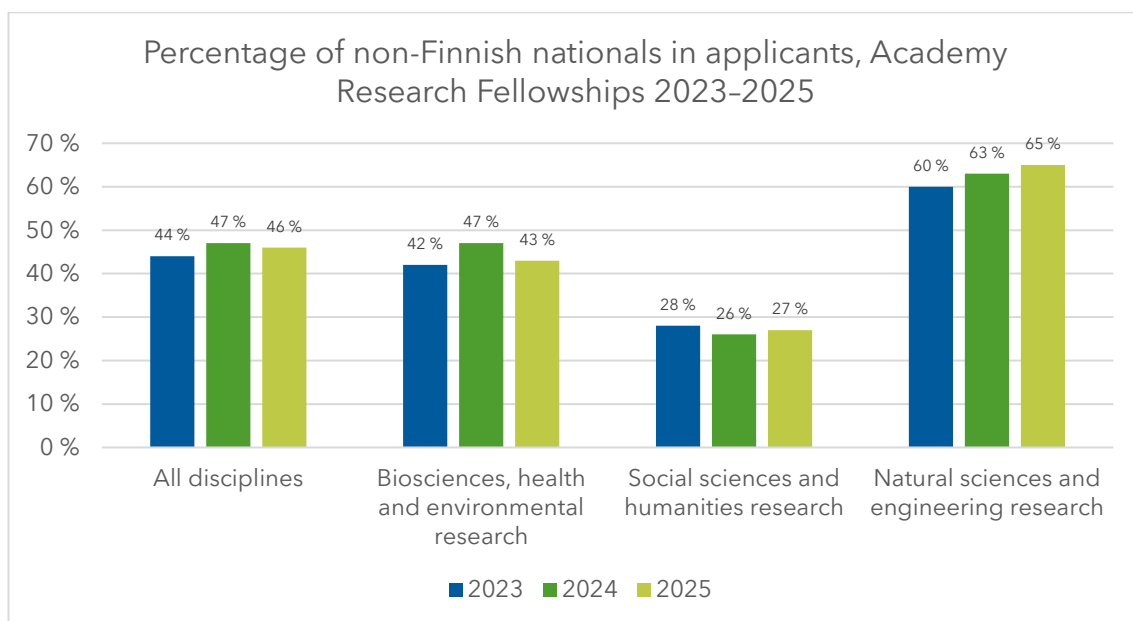
**Appendix 3. Winter call data, nationality of applicants and funded researchers, Figures 5-8, source RCF data dashboard Sep 2025**



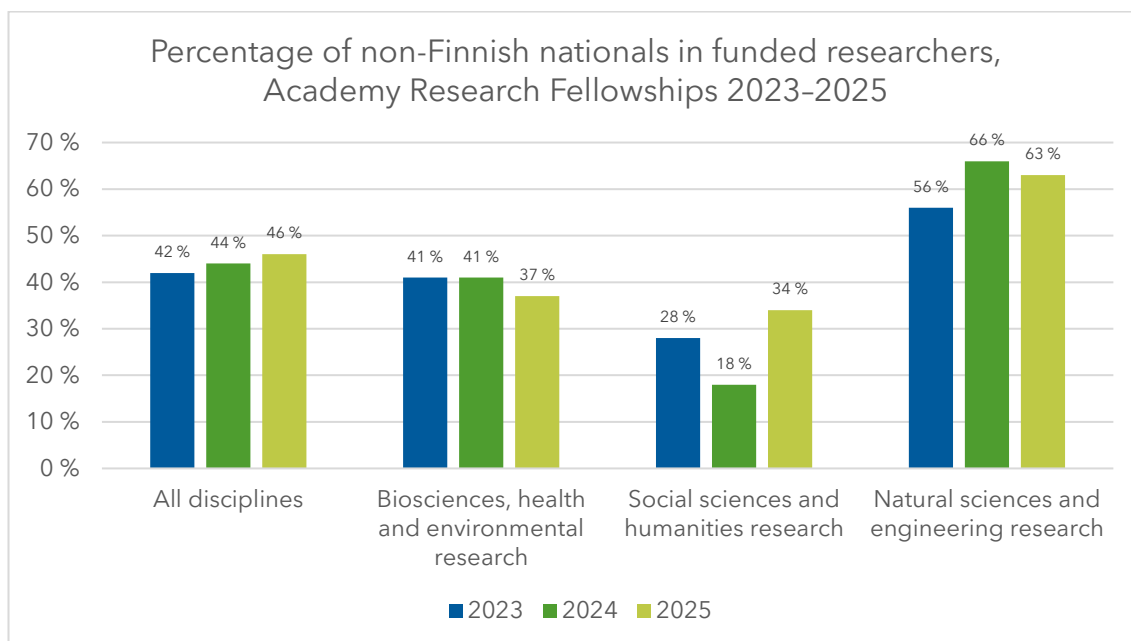
**Figure 5. Percentage of non-Finnish nationals in applicants, Academy Project calls 2021-2025.**



**Figure 6. Percentage of non-Finnish nationals in funded researchers, Academy Project calls 2021-2025.**



**Figure 7. Percentage of non-Finnish nationals in applicants, Academy Research Fellowship calls 2023-2025.**



**Figure 8. Percentage of non-Finnish nationals in funded researchers, Academy Research Fellowship calls 2023-2025.**

#### Appendix 4. Assessment of current state of personnel and proposed measures

**Table 2. Assessment of staff equality and nondiscrimination situation and proposed measures**

Staff equality and nondiscrimination		
Criteria	Assessment of current state	Proposed measures
<b>Equality</b>		
<b>Gender</b>	According to the 2025 personnel survey, gender equality is mainly realised well. The RCF has long been implementing measures to balance the gender distribution. Today, discussion on gender equality is also a natural part of everyday operations. The RCF's flexible and family-friendly practices are praised. In terms of pay, gender equality is seen as lagging behind other areas.	A gender and nondiscrimination impact assessment related to pay and remuneration development measures is carried out, and the impact of the measures will be monitored as part of the pay survey.  The measures required by the Pay Transparency Directive are implemented.  Included in measure 7.
<b>Gender identity</b>	There is little information, or the staff do not share their experiences very openly. According to the personnel survey, well implemented, with 41% of "cannot	The staff's competence and understanding of equality and nondiscrimination is increased through training and active internal communication. All staff required to complete eOppiva training.

	say" responses. The office has a unisex toilet.	Included in measure 5.
<b>Nondiscrimination</b>		
<b>Age</b>	According to the 2025 personnel survey, nondiscrimination in age is mainly realised well. The staff includes employees of different ages, although the average age of the office employees is high. Greater attention is needed to the diverse nature of care responsibilities. In terms of pay, age related nondiscrimination is seen as lagging behind other areas.	A gender and nondiscrimination impact assessment related to pay and remuneration development measures is carried out, and the impact of the measures will be monitored as part of the pay survey.  Included in measure 7.
<b>Origin or nationality</b>	There is very little diversity in staff in terms of origin or nationality. The work community is perceived as homogeneous. According to the personnel survey, well implemented, with 45% of "cannot say" responses.	The recruitment practices, such as language proficiency requirements and opportunities for increasing staff diversity through recruitment will be reviewed. In the case of equal applicants, the possibility of positive action (gender or various nondiscrimination perspectives) is utilised in recruitment.  The RCF's multilingualism practices are developed. Diversity is considered in recruitment communications.  Included in measure 6.
<b>Language</b>	The agency's main language is Finnish, and Swedish is also used to a small extent. English is used in the panel work of the research funding process. The RCF has no statutory eligibility requirements (regarding language or educational qualifications); instead, the language proficiency requirement can be determined according to the nature of the task.	In recruitment, better consideration will be given to language proficiency required by the task. The level of proficiency required in Finnish and Swedish can be assessed according to the situation (excellent/good/satisfactory). The agency's multilingualism practices will be developed so that they also support working in English.  Included in measure 6.
<b>Religion and beliefs</b>	There is little information, or the staff do not share their experiences openly. According to the personnel survey, well implemented, with 45% of "cannot say" responses. Also, personnel	In the future, the realisation of a safe space in terms of religion/beliefs and its expression will be ensured. Language and practices that take all employees

	feedback has highlighted the fact that discussing religion/beliefs may be challenging.	equally into account will be strengthened.  Included in measure 5.
<b>Opinion, political activities and trade union activities</b>	There is little information, or the staff do not share their experiences very openly. According to the personnel survey, well implemented, with 40% of "cannot say" responses.	In the future, the realisation of a safe space in terms of opinion and its expression will be ensured. Language and practices that take all employees equally into account will be strengthened.  Included in measure 5.
<b>Family relations</b>	Flexible office/remote work policy support those in various family situations. Intervening in the accumulation of accrued hours has also supported work-life balance. Some of the staff have care responsibilities for older parents.	Raising awareness of family diversity and strengthening language and practices that take all employees equally into account.  Included in measure 5.
<b>State of health and disability</b>	The rules of the premises have been created, and they emphasise, among other things, the consideration of others to ensure the smooth running of the work, as well as the fragrance-free policy. According to the agency's respect rules, a calm and safe atmosphere is maintained in the work community. According to the personnel survey, well implemented, with 34% of "cannot say" responses.  With regard to the agency's operating methods and office premises, there is a recognised need to address accessibility factors such as hearing accessibility, sensory sensitivities and neurodiversity.	The implementation of the rules is monitored, and the necessary communication or other measures are taken to implement the rules and accessibility perspectives. The implementation of hybrid events in a hearing-accessible manner (equipment, operating methods) is ensured.  Diversity related to health and disabilities will also be considered when developing recruitment practices and communications.  Included in measures 5 and 6.
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	There is little information, or the staff do not share their experiences very openly. According to the personnel survey, well implemented, with 32% of "cannot say" responses. The staff workshop has highlighted that fact that daily interaction does not necessarily recognise the diversity of different family forms. The RCF has	Awareness of family diversity is raised, and language and practices that take all employees equally into account are strengthened. The staff's competence and understanding of equality and nondiscrimination is increased through training and active internal communication. We will participate in the Pride week.

	participated in the Pride parade and Pride week, for example, by raising the flag in two years.	Included in measure 5.
<b>General / different criteria related</b>	The RCF's internal diversity network was launched in 2024. The safer space principles were created in 2024, and their application has been practised with the staff.	The aim is to talk about the network and activate the RCF's internal network. We will develop our competence, recruitment practices and operating methods, as well as our culture to support diversity.  Included in measures 5 and 6.

## Appendix 5. Pay survey

Most of the personnel are covered by the central government pay system. Their wages consist of a task-specific pay component (based on job grades) and an individual pay component (based on performance level, percentage of job grade pay). Earnings from regular working hours may additionally include an individual bonus (including general increases), individual monthly remunerations, and shop steward's and labour protection representative's fees.

Senior management receives individual remuneration based on separate agreement.

Discretionary individual remuneration has been paid to supervisors (9 persons, EUR 700/month) and employees in highly demanding expert positions. The aforementioned remuneration ranges from 136 to 400 euros, and at year-end 2025 it was paid to 10 persons, seven men and three women. In 2025, the shop steward's fee was paid to one woman and one man. The labour protection representative's fee was paid to one man.

The RCF's pay system comprises 14 different job grades (81-94). Clerical personnel are at job grade levels 86-87, expert tasks are at 87-93 and supervisory tasks are at level 94. Levels 81-85 have not been used.

The number of men is at least five, only at the job grade levels 89-90, so they can be compared in the table below (situation 12/2025). Average earnings have been reported for all levels with a total of more than five persons. The table shows that the equal pay index at level 89 is 99.3 and at level 90 it is 98.8. The equal pay index for the entire agency is 101.9. The table includes information on full-time employees who received full-time pay throughout December 2025.

In other words, the average pay of women in the entire agency is slightly higher than that of men, whereas at expert levels 89 and 90 men have a slightly higher overall pay. Minor differences in pay are

due to differences in individual remuneration and individual bonuses, which are higher among men in expert positions than among women.

**Table 3. Equal pay**

Job grade	Number of women	Number of men	Average earnings	Average earnings of women	Average earnings of men	Equal pay index
<b>86</b>	8	1	3,874.5			
<b>87</b>	6	3	4,311.7			
<b>88</b>	3	4	4,856.3			
<b>89</b>	13	10	5,079.6	5,064.2	5,099.6	99.3
<b>90</b>	17	10	5,626.8	5,601.0	5,670.6	98.8
<b>91</b>	1	1				
<b>92</b>	3	0				
<b>93</b>	3	1				
<b>94</b>	7	2	7,285.1			
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>32</b>				<b>101.9</b>