



Instructions for reviewing applications – FIRI 2024 call for international research infrastructure memberships

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1. Objectives of the Research Council of Finland and the calls

The Research Council of Finland’s mission is to open up new avenues for excellent, responsible and high-impact research. Our objectives are to advance new scientific breakthroughs and solutions for the benefit of society; the capacity of research for renewal and reform; and better and higher-impact skills and competence. Achieving these objectives entails having competitive researchers, research environments and competence clusters as well as high-level research infrastructures that contribute to the renewal of science and society. Our funding is based on open competition, independent peer review and responsible science.

1.1. FIRI 2024 call for international research infrastructure memberships

The aim of this call is to assess whether it would be beneficial for Finland to become a state member in international research infrastructures.

2. Role of experts and Research Council of Finland

Experts are invited to review the scientific excellence, the impact and the operation of the research infrastructure. The experts are esteemed, international researchers with a background in the area of the applications and additionally experience related to large international research infrastructures. The decisions, whether to recommend membership, are made by the Finnish Research Infrastructure Committee (FIRI Committee) based on the peer review and science policy factors.

2.1. Panel chair

Each panel is assigned a chair from among the panel members. The duties of the chair are to chair the panel meeting via an online platform (Teams), lead the discussion and ensure that all applications are reviewed in a responsible and fair manner. The chair also has duties as a panel member.

2.2. Individual reviewers and panel members

Experts are usually both individual reviewers and panel members. The duties of individual reviewers are to review and write review reports of the applications allocated to them. As a rule, individual reviewers also participate in the panel as members. All panel members are expected to actively participate in the panel meeting.

Applications will be allocated to at least two individual reviewers and possibly a reader in the panel review phase before the panel meeting. The reader is asked to form an opinion of the application and to join the panel discussion without writing a review. One of the two reviewers will be a summariser in the panel meeting and write the final panel summary review for the application.

2.3. Panel

FIRI applications submitted to the Research Council of Finland are reviewed in one metapanel. The panel consists of a chair, a vice chair and panel members representing the scope of the panel.

2.4. Research Council of Finland officials

The Research Council of Finland's officials invite the panel members and, if needed, additional external individual reviewers to support the panel. The officials provide instructions on the review process and



organise a pre-panel meeting when relevant. The officials also take care of the practical arrangements in the panel meeting and follow that the review process is carried out according to the Research Council's established procedures.

2.5. Decision-making bodies

After receiving the review reports, [the FIRI Committee](#) (link takes you to the Research Council of Finland's website) makes the final decisions on whether to recommend membership in the international research infrastructure organisation. The result of the peer review is a major factor contributing to the final decision, but organisational commitment, comments from the Research Council of Finland's scientific councils and factors related to science policy (e.g. impact on national research infrastructure landscape and impact beyond academia) also influence the decision.

3. Review criteria and rating scale

- The main criteria in the review are based on the characteristics listed in **the call text**. In short, experts are invited to review the scientific excellence, the impact and the operation of the research infrastructure in the panel review phase.

Written reviews: Evaluative comments are particularly valuable to the decision-making bodies. Also, after the funding decisions have been made, the applicants will receive the individual reviews and the panel summary assessment including the names of the experts on their own applications. Written reviews play a crucial role in aiding decision-making bodies. In addition, they provide important feedback to applicants. Reviewers should therefore:

- write evaluative comments and give justifications using full sentences
- avoid descriptive comments and copying text directly from the application
- write comments under each review item, taking into consideration the specific guidelines for each item (however, item 'Review panel's summary assessment' will be developed and finalised during the panel meeting)
- maintain coherence throughout their comments and give constructive feedback.

Numerical rating: The consistency between the numerical rating and the written comments is particularly important. The rating scale ranges from 6 (outstanding) to 1 (insufficient). At all levels of the review process, please pay close attention to the potential for breakthrough research.



Rating	Description
6 (outstanding)	Demonstrates extremely high novelty and/or innovation; has potential to substantially advance science at global level; presents a high-gain plan that may include risks
5 (excellent)	Is very good in international comparison – contains no significant elements to be improved
4 (good)	Is in general sound but contains some elements that should be improved
3 (fair)	Is in general sound but contains important elements that should be improved
2 (poor)	Contains flaws and needs substantial modification or improvement
1 (insufficient)	Contains severe flaws that are intrinsic to the proposed project or the application

3.1. Individual review

Each application is assigned to at least two individual reviewers. Reviewers write individual reviews, using specified sections in the review forms, and give subratings and overall ratings to the applications. The individual review reports will be given to the applicants as is, including the names of the reviewers. It is important to note that these reports provide important material for the decision-making bodies and valuable feedback for the applicants.

3.2. Review panel meeting (online)

The panel members have access to all applications submitted to the panel, with exceptions made in the case of conflicts of interest (see section 1.3 Review principles). Also, individual reviews will be made available to all panel members at the latest one week before the meeting. However, please note that these review reports will only be made available to panel members once all review reports have been submitted to the Research Council. Thus, please adhere to the deadline for submitting the individual review reports. This supports the preparation of the panel meeting following the individual review phase.

At the panel meeting, the panel discusses the applications. The individual reviewers appointed to the application will present their opinion on the application and two additional panel members (read-only/reader) will be assigned to read, at minimum, the abstract of the application to contribute to the



panel discussion. The review panel's summary assessment will be written for each application during the panel meeting by a dedicated summariser (a panel member). The summary is based on the discussions and the individual reviews.

The panel decides on three subratings and a final overall rating for each application.

3.3. How to review applications in the Research Council's online services

Please use the [Research Council of Finland's online services](#) (link takes you to the online services via our website) to review applications. You can find the review instructions and offline versions of all our review forms under [Guides for reviewers](#) on our website. Both individual reviews and panel review reports are completed in the online services. You can access the research plan or other sections in the application form directly from the review form questions. However, we do expect you to read the whole application.

4. Expert fees

There will be a modest compensation for participation, EUR 550 (EUR 700 for panel chair and vice chair) per panel day (taxed as per your national taxation rules). This compensation also covers participation in a short pre-meeting. Furthermore, EUR 150 will be paid for each individual review.

To claim your fees, please enter your own personal banking details in the online services. The honorarium will be paid into your personal bank account. Please notice that IBAN is mandatory for bank accounts in Europe. Also fill in the BIC/SWIFT code/clearing code/routing number.

Make sure that you have entered your personal details correctly in the online services to avoid any unnecessary delays in the payment. The payslip will be sent to your home address.

