

**Proof of Concept 2026**

Proof of Concept

Panel/Name of reviewer:

Application number:

Name of applicant:

Title of proposed project:

How to review Proof of Concept applications

The Research Council of Finland's Proof of Concept Funding aims to promote versatile utilisation of research results produced in projects funded by the RCF or the Strategic Research Council (SRC). The funding is aimed at demonstrating the feasibility of ideas on how to utilise research and at strengthening the utilisation of research results based on these ideas. The funding promotes the economic or other societal impact of research. The funding can be used, for example, to pilot or test research results in practice, or to develop new procedures for business, public administration or the third sector.

Provide both a written review and numerical rating in section 1 (Impact and utilisation potential of research and project's relevance to call) and section 2 (Implementation), and give an overall rating in section 4. Write evaluative comments rather than descriptive ones. Section 3 (Review panel's summary assessment) is written by the panel during the panel meeting.

Use a rating scale ranging from 6 (outstanding) to 1 (insufficient). The consistency between the numerical rating and the written comments is particularly important.

Rating scale	Description
6 (outstanding)	Demonstrates outstanding innovativeness and utilisation potential; demonstrates a highly feasible and innovative plan for utilisation of research results; promises crucial economic or other societal impact
5 (excellent)	Demonstrates very significant innovativeness and utilisation potential; demonstrates a very feasible and innovative plan for utilisation of research results; promises very high economic or other societal impact
4 (good)	Is in general sound but contains a few elements that could be improved; demonstrates good innovativeness and utilisation potential; promises economic or other societal impact
3 (fair)	Is in general sound but contains important elements that should be improved; demonstrates some innovativeness and utilisation potential; promises some economic or other societal impact
2 (poor)	Contains flaws; is in need of substantial modification or improvement; promises very little economic or other societal impact
1 (insufficient)	Contains severe flaws that are intrinsic to the proposed project or the application



1 Impact and utilisation potential of research and project's relevance to call

1.1 Impact and utilisation potential of research and project's relevance to call

Subrating (1-6)

Please review:

- innovativeness of research utilisation idea and project's alignment with call objectives
- potential for economically or societally significant impact
- innovativeness and convincingness of utilisation path
- high risk, high gain
- significance of expected project results/outputs considering selected national strategic choices
 - See **research utilisation plan**.
 - The national strategic choices are:
 - data and data-based value creation
 - disruptive technologies
 - health and wellbeing
 - climate, environment and the Arctic dimension
 - security, resilience and defence.
 - The applicant is asked to indicate in the application form to which strategic choice area(s) their project contributes, and to justify their selection in the research utilisation plan.

2 Implementation

2.1. Feasibility of research utilisation plan, including aspects of responsible science

Subrating (1-6)

Please review:

- feasibility of project, considering extent to which proposed project may include high risks
- resources, activities and methods
- appropriateness of project goals, milestones and indicators for monitoring progress
- innovativeness of co-creation, co-design and participatory methods with user groups and stakeholders during different project phases
- identified potential risks and mitigation plan
- research ethics and good scientific practice, open access to research publications and data, data management, intellectual property rights, sustainable development within project, and consideration of gender equality and nondiscrimination
 - See **research utilisation plan**.
 - See **mobility plan** in the application form.
 - See **collaborators** in the application form.
 - See **brief data management plan** in the application form.
 - See possible **letter(s) of collaboration**.



2.2 Expertise, human resources and collaboration, including aspects of responsible science

Subrating (1-6)

Please review:

- competences and research utilisation expertise of applicant (for consortium: all applicants) in managing project implementation
- added value of consortium in project implementation (if applicable)
- complementary expertise of project participants (incl. researchers, impact experts and external collaborators), and their appropriateness and sufficiency for proposed project
- roles and responsibilities of each project participant in tasks and work packages
- adequacy of human resources for project implementation, with attention to promoting equality and nondiscrimination within project
- adequacy of resources for project implementation, with attention to aim of generating economic or societal impact
- contribution of collaborators, engaged with their own funding, and impact of their environment on project's potential success
- significance of planned user group and stakeholder engagement for implementation of plan
- significance of planned mobility for implementation of research utilisation plan, personnel training and skills development
 - See **research utilisation plan**.
 - See **most relevant publications and other key outputs** in the application form.
 - See **CV(s)** of the applicant(s).
 - See **mobility plan** in the application form.
 - See **collaborators** in the application form.
 - See possible **letter(s) of collaboration**.
- A consortium application consists of two or more subprojects each with nominated PIs and separate budgets but a joint plan. The consortium implements the joint plan together with a view to achieving more extensive added value than through normal cooperation.

3 Review panel's summary assessment of proposal

TO BE WRITTEN DURING PANEL MEETING

3.1 Main strengths and weaknesses of proposal and their justifications; possible other remarks

TO BE COMPLETED ONLY AT THE PANEL MEETING

Section 3 of the form is applicable only to the top-tier applications selected for discussion during the review panel meeting.

3.1.1 Main strengths and their justifications

(no numerical rating)

- Summary assessment of application's main strengths with justifications



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- Refer to the review criteria in sections 1 and 2.
- To be completed only at the panel meeting

3.1.2 Main weaknesses and their justifications

(no numerical rating)

- Summary assessment of application's main weaknesses with justifications
 - Refer to the review criteria in sections 1 and 2.
 - To be completed only at the panel meeting

3.1.3 Other remarks (if any):

- Any other remarks can be written here.
- To be completed only at the panel meeting

4 Overall rating	Rating (1-6)
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- Please note that the final rating should not be a mathematical average of the subratings. For example, the application should not be penalised if it has a slight weakness in one evaluation item that is later strengthened in another item (e.g. lack of some expertise in a local team but compensated through international collaboration).

Ranking based on panel discussion (the ranking is made during the panel meeting)

Your application was ranked [ordinal number] of all [number] [Funding instrument name] applications reviewed in this panel. Only applications with a final rating of 5 or 6 were ranked.

