

Instructions for reviewing funding applications - Call for applications to strengthen R&D activities and cooperation in wellbeing services counties 2027

Content

1. Objectives of the Research Council of Finland and the funding schemes	1
1.1. Call for applications to strengthen R&D activities and cooperation in wellbeing services counties	2
2. Role of experts and the RCF	3
2.1. Panel chair	3
2.2. Individual reviewers and panel members	3
2.3. Panels	3
2.4. RCF officials	4
2.5. Decision-making bodies	4
3. Review and ranking	4
3.1. Review criteria and rating scale	4
3.2. Individual review	6
3.3. Review panel meeting (online)	6
3.4. How to review applications in the RCF's online services	6
4. Expert remuneration	7

1. Objectives of the Research Council of Finland and the funding schemes

The Research Council of Finland's (RCF) mission is to open 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. Our funding is based on open competition, independent peer review and responsible science. We grant funding to researchers and research teams as well as to the most promising early-career researchers through different funding instruments.



1.1. Call for applications to strengthen R&D activities and cooperation in wellbeing services counties

The RCF will allocate 8 million euros in 2027 to strengthen R&D activities and collaboration in the wellbeing services counties.

Objectives of call

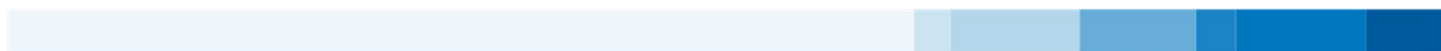
- The funding aims to strengthen R&D activities in the wellbeing services counties by enhancing collaboration between the collaborative areas for healthcare and social welfare and other research actors in the regions.
- The funding promotes and increases R&D activities in the wellbeing services counties and reinforces related collaboration.
- The funding supports the promotion of health and wellbeing and the development of services within the collaborative areas for healthcare and social welfare.

Objectives of projects

- Projects must increase collaboration between wellbeing services counties, as well as with universities, universities of applied sciences and government research institutes.
- Projects strengthen the quality of R&D activities and social and health care services.
- The R&D activities carried out in the projects improve productivity and effectiveness in the social and healthcare sector.

The purpose of the funding is to increase collaboration between wellbeing services counties and universities, universities of applied sciences and government research institutes. Therefore, funding can only be applied for by consortia. A consortium must include at least three parties:

- The consortium PI must be employed by a wellbeing services county maintaining a university hospital or by the HUS Group.
- At least one subproject PI must be employed by another wellbeing services county.
- At least one subproject PI must be employed by a university, a university of applied sciences or a government research institute.





Research Council of Finland

In addition, the consortium may be strengthened through collaboration with other regional actors (e.g. NGOs, municipalities and companies). **RCF officials have checked each consortium for eligibility.**

The focus of the review should be on the project's relevance to the call, impact and implementation.

2. Role of experts and the RCF

Experts are invited to review the R&D excellence and impact of the applications. The experts are national and international researchers in the field of the applications concerned. The funding decisions are made by the RCF's decision-making bodies based on the scientific review and science policy of the RCF and its scientific councils or subcommittees.

2.1. Panel chair

The 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. After the panel meeting the chair is expected to deliver a brief memorandum including feedback on the review process and the panel meeting.

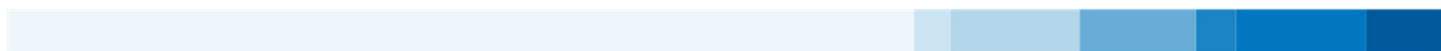
2.2. Individual reviewers and panel members

Experts may act as 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/or possibly a reader in the panel review phase. The reader is asked to form an opinion of the application without writing a review. One of the reviewers will be a summariser in the panel meeting and will write the final panel summary review for the application.

2.3. Panels

All applications submitted to the call for applications to strengthen R&D activities and cooperation in wellbeing services counties will be reviewed in the same panel. The panel





Research Council of Finland

consists of a chair, a possible vice chair and panel members representing the scope of the panel.

2.4. RCF officials

The RCF's officials invite the panel members and, if needed, additional external individual reviewers to support the panel, 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 ensure that the review process follows established RCF procedures.

2.5. Decision-making bodies

After the scientific review, the funding decisions are made by a subcommittee for the RCF's thematic calls. The decisions are based on the peer review and the panel ranking, considering the specific objectives of the call.

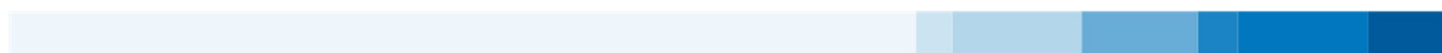
3. Review and ranking

3.1. Review criteria and rating scale

The main criteria in the review are:

- Alignment of proposed plan with objectives of call and project
 - o Projects must increase collaboration between wellbeing services counties, as well as with universities, universities of applied sciences and government research institutes.
 - o Projects strengthen the quality of R&D activities and social and healthcare services.
 - o The R&D activities carried out in the projects improve productivity and effectiveness in the social and healthcare sector.
- Quality of R&D activities facilitated by the consortia
- Aspects of impact in research plan
 - o impact on social and healthcare services
 - o impact of R&D activities
 - o other societal impact.
- Implementation of projects, including aspects of responsible science.

Written reviews: Please note that, 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. Evaluative comments are particularly valuable to the decision-making bodies. Written reviews play a crucial role in aiding the 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 and give subratings 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).

Rating	Description
6 (outstanding)	Has potential to substantially contribute to the objectives of the call; has potential to substantially support high quality R&D activities; presents a very high-quality plan
5 (excellent)	Has potential to contribute to the objectives of the call; has potential to support high quality R&D activities; presents a high-quality plan contains no significant elements to be improved
4 (good)	Has potential to contribute to the objectives of the call; has potential to support good quality R&D activities; presents a good-quality plan 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

* Below threshold for panel discussion if all individual overall ratings are below 4

3.2. 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 sub- 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.

3.3. Review panel meeting (online)

The panel members have access to all applications submitted to the panel, excluding conflicts of interest (see Review principles, section 1.3). 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 RCF. Therefore, the deadline for submitting the individual review reports is strict.

In the panel meeting, the panel discusses the applications that reached the panel review phase. The individual reviewers appointed to the application will present their opinion on the application and, typically, a third panel member (read-only/reader) may be assigned to read the application to form an additional, more general view of it. 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 the final overall rating for each application.

When the final overall rating is 5 or 6, the panel will also decide subratings for specified review criteria. To complete the review, the panel is asked to rank the applications rated 5 or 6. The applications are ranked based on the review criteria listed in the review form – no additional criteria will be used.

3.4. How to review applications in the RCF's online services

Please use the [RCF'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 remuneration

There will be a compensation for participation, EUR 460 (EUR 600 for panel chair) per full panel day (taxed as per your national taxation rules). This compensation also covers participation in a short pre-meeting. Furthermore, EUR 100 will be paid for each individual review.

To claim your remuneration, please enter your own personal banking details in the online services. The money 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 payment. The payslip will be sent to your home address.

