



# SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN THE WATER SECTOR IN FINLAND



An international panel of experts assessed the scientific quality of Finnish water research in 2007. In its report, the panel noted that the scientific quality of Finnish research in the field is of a high standard.

Research in the water sector in Finland is mainly carried out in universities and research institutes. Funding comes from the institutional basic funding and from the money raised externally and almost always competitively. The Academy of Finland is a main external funding source for the scientific research.

Several doctoral programmes in Finland are in the field or have a thematic interface with water research. These include the Doctoral Programme in Integrated Catchment and Water Resources Management (VALUE), the Doctoral Programme in the Built Environment (RYM-TO), the Finnish Graduate School in Environmental Science and Technology (EnSTe), the Graduate School in Environmental Health (SYTYKE), and the Doctoral Programme in Public Health (DPPH).

## ACADEMY OF FINLAND'S FUNDING IS COMPETITION BASED

Academy of Finland's funding for research in the water sector has been on the increase. In 2007–2010, funding from the Research Council for Biosciences and Environment totalled an estimated 26.5 million euros, and annual funding volumes have been rising. Total funding from the Research Council for Natural Sciences and Engineering in 2007–2010 was at least 2.9 million euros. In 2009, the Research Council for Natural Sciences and Engineering announced a targeted call on the subject of water engineering research. The Research Council for Culture and Society and the Research Council for Health have also granted funding to individual projects in the water sector. The Climate Change Research Programme (FICCA) awarded funding (2011–2014) to one research project and several sub-projects focusing on water research.

## RESEARCH PROGRAMME AKVA

The Academy of Finland has recently decided to target funding to a research programme on Sustainable Governance of Aquatic Resources AKVA. The research programme will respond to both the scientific development needs and the societal research needs that have been identified. All these needs are associated, on the one hand, with the Finnish Government Resolution on Water Protection Policy Outlines to 2015 and, on the other hand, with research needs emerging from international water policy.

### MAIN AIMS

- Support scientific research that contributes to the sustainable management, adequacy and future safety of water and aquatic resources
- Contribute to enhancing the scientific standards of water research in Finland
- Integrate excellence from different disciplines in joint projects
- Research, analyse and synthesise the aquatic environment as a whole for securing future demand for water and the increasing needs for protection

### PROGRAMME THEMES

- Pressures of change on aquatic environments and their management
- Ecosystem services in aquatic environments and safeguarding those services
- Sustainable use of aquatic resources in the future

### COOPERATION

National cooperation within the programme will be carried out with the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation Tekes, Finnish ministries responsible for this sector and other potential bodies. The launch of a research programme on aquatic resources is one of the aims specified by the Finnish National Water Programme.

The Research Programme will aim selectively to build cooperation with research funding agencies in other countries that are committed to support high-level scientific research and that are recognised as interesting partners for Finnish water research.

In 2012 AKVA granted support for two Finnish researcher groups that were successful in the joint call on water topics launched by New Indigo ERA-NET and the Indian Department of Science and Technology (DST).

The programme is planning to announce a second, international call in 2013. Partner countries that have been identified as potentially interesting with respect to research and co-operation in the water sector include Canada and the United States.

### SCOPE

The research programme had its first, national call for projects in September 2011. Funding for the first call is EUR 11 million. Projects within the programme will mainly be funded from 2012 through to 2016.

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