

Memo

Research Council of Finland's call to strengthen R&D activity and cooperation in wellbeing services counties – Info session: Wed 2 September 2026, 15:30–16:30 (Teams)

Target group: Researchers and developers at Tampere University and Tampere University of Applied Sciences

Programme

The chair of the event, Partnership Manager Ulriika Leponiemi, opened the event.

1. Research Council of Finland call text and key points of the call / Mariaana Savia, Research Specialist, Tampere University, MET Faculty

Key points of the call

- The call announcement has been published (<https://www.aka.fi/en/research-funding/apply-for-funding/calls-for-applications/for-research-teams/2027-call-to-strengthen-rd-activity-and-cooperation-in-wellbeing-services-counties/>)
- The application period is 21 October 2026–18 November 2026.
- Funding decisions are expected in May 2027.
- The funding period for projects that receive positive funding decisions can begin on 1 September 2027.
- The duration of the projects is a maximum of three (3) years.
- The total funding available is EUR 8 million.
- The maximum funding for one consortium is EUR 800,000.
- Funding covers 100% of the costs.

Applicants and eligibility

- No individual applicants; the consortium must include at least three parties.
- The consortium PI's site of research must be a wellbeing services county that maintains a university hospital (or the HUS Group).
- At least one subproject PI must have their site of research in another wellbeing services county.
- At least one subproject PI must have their site of research at a university, a university of applied sciences or a government research institute.
- Other cooperation partners typically strengthen the application, for example municipalities, associations, and companies.
- In last year's call, the absence of cooperation partners was seen as a weakness in applications.
- An applicant (an individual person) may submit only one application. A person may participate in several applications as a collaborative partner.
- The consortium leader and subproject leaders must hold a doctoral degree.
- Leaders of consortia and subprojects funded in the corresponding 2025 call may not apply in this call. Other Research Council of Finland funding does not prevent applicants from applying.
- There are maximum numbers for consortium applications. In the Inland Finland collaborative area, the maximum number is six (6) applications.

Objectives of the call and the project

Call objectives

- The funding is aimed at strengthening cooperation between the collaborative areas for healthcare and social welfare and other research actors in the areas.
- The funding is aimed at promoting R&D activity and cooperation in the wellbeing services counties.
- The funding is aimed at promoting welfare and health and the development of services in the collaborative areas for healthcare and social welfare.

Project objectives

- The project needs to increase cooperation between wellbeing services counties, universities, universities of applied sciences and government research institutes.
- The project needs to strengthen the quality of R&D activity and the health and social services.
- The project's R&D activities need to improve the productivity and impact of the health and social services system.

Criteria affecting the assessment of the applications

- The most important emphasis is on how well the project implements the objectives of the call.
- It is particularly important to increase and strengthen cooperation.
- In addition, quality of R&D activities, impact, feasibility and responsible science are assessed.

Other notes

- PI salaries can be included in the application.
- The sub-projects leave their own budgets.
- The university's subproject needs to go via the Tassu system.

2. Pirha's process and handling of letters of intent / Kati Kristiansson, Director of Research and Development, Wellbeing Services County of Pirkanmaa

- Pirha has its own process for handling and preparing applications.
- The process will proceed in the same way as last year: Pirha will collect a letter of intent from all interested applicants. After this, a selection process is carried out, based on which the actual applications to be prepared for the application are selected.
- More detailed instructions and a form for submitting letters of intent will be available on Friday 4 September 2026.
- On 1 October 2026, Pirha inform which six (6) letters of intent have been selected, i.e. which applicants may start preparing the actual application to the Research Council of Finland.
- From Pirha's perspective, it is essential that letters of intent are submitted in the Orchidea system (or using the Word form if Orchidea system cannot be used).
- The evaluation of letters of intent is based on the Research Council of Finland's review criteria.
- Compatibility with Pirha's strategy and implementation plan will also be assessed.
- Pirha's strategy is built around four (4) strategic priorities; the implementation plan includes development measures. Applicants should take into account the aspects that are relevant to their own application.
- The letter of intent form asks how the plan supports Pirha's strategy and implementation plan.

- It is important that the letter of intent is compatible with Pirha's strategy and objectives and creates added value for the wellbeing services county.
- The cooperation is emphasized in this call, including, for example, organizations, municipalities, patient panels, etc. Therefore, various forms of cooperation should be taken into account in the application.

3. Questions and discussion / Partnership Manager Ulriika Leponiemi

- *Pirha will provide more detailed instructions for the letter of intent on Friday 4.9.2026. How will information about this be communicated?*
 - Instructions for submitting a letter of intent will be available on the website (<https://research.tuni.fi/pirhatkio/>). Information on the matter will also be provided through Pirha's researcher list. In addition, Ulriika Leponiemi and Mariaana Savia will send information to TAU researchers and Hanna Uotila to TAMK's researchers.
- *Applicants are encouraged to review the projects funded in last year's call and their themes on Research.fi website (<https://tiedejatutkimus.fi/fi/results/fundings?decisionMaker=MUU&callId=13979>). In last year's call, approximately half of the funded projects were related to a specific disease, and approximately half focused more on structures and cooperation models.*
- *What changes are there compared with last year's letter of intent?*
 - Unlike in last year's letter-of-intent call, this year the name of Pirha's contact person must be included in the letter of intent. Commitments and key parties should also be named and confirmed. Minor additions can be made at a later stage.
- *At what level should the budget be described in the letter of intent?*
 - There are no requirements for a detailed budget in the letter of intent.
 - Research.fi website shows the amounts awarded per consortium in the previous round.
 - It should be remembered that this follows the full-cost model.
 - Applicants should consider what activities are realistic within the budget.
- *Should the other areas be from the yta (collaborative areas for healthcare and social welfare)?*
 - It is advisable to consider what kind of consortium would support the application.
 - This is not an evaluation criterion.
 - Cooperation with the yta will be carried out in any case.
 - All wellbeing services counties are partners in this.
- *Different wellbeing services counties have their own procedures for submitting letters of intent. Is it possible to submit to more than one wellbeing services county?*
 - Pirha does not receive information about applications submitted to other wellbeing services counties.
 - If a situation arises where a letter of intent has been submitted to several wellbeing services counties and proceeds, for example, in two counties, the applicant must indicate which one they are going to apply for funding for.
 - If the consortium leader is from Pirha, the application must be submitted to Pirha.
- *The consortium leader and subproject leader may submit one application. Can a person participate also under a subproject without being the subproject leader? Or would that invalidate all applications?*

- The Research Council of Finland's guidelines state that participation in several applications is possible as a collaborative partner.
- This matter will be confirmed from the Research Council of Finland.
CONFIRMED: An individual **researcher may receive direct funding from only one project within the same call**. In other words, a researcher cannot be employed as a project researcher in more than one project. However, they may participate as a collaborator in several projects. Short-term research, investigation, or other assignments may also be carried out as purchased services (from partners), generally for a maximum duration of six month
- *How much funding has been reserved for the call?*
 - EUR 8 million has been reserved for the call, corresponding to approximately 10 projects (EUR 800,000/project).
- *Can Fimlab participate in applying?*
 - This will be clarified in more detail, and information will be provided on the website and in the letter of intent instructions.
 - The situation regarding Sydänkeskus and Coxa will also be clarified.
- *What kind of panel evaluates the letters of intent at Pirha?*
 - The panel consists of profession directors, chief physician for hospital services, chief physician for effectiveness etc.
 - Pirha uses the Research Council of Finland's review criteria as support and also assesses how the letters of intent links to Pirha's strategy and implementation plan.
- *Hard science versus practical development: which does Pirha emphasize?*
 - Last year, when evaluating the letters of intent, high scores were given to both.
 - The aim is to select a variety of applications from among all letters of intent.
- *How did Pirha's applications perform in last year's call?*
 - Pirha's success rate was similar to that of other wellbeing services counties.
 - However, it is not directly comparable with other counties, because different counties were allowed to submit different numbers of applications.
 - Last year, 3 out of 6 applications received funding
- *Were projects related to rescue services funded last year?*
 - Not known.
- *Is the rescue services side involved in evaluating the letters of intent?*
 - This is being considered; there is a possibility of requesting expert assistance from there.