UNIVERSITY OF OULU

Research and Project Services - support for researchers

Päivi Tomperi
Research Funding Specialist
(FSci, SGO, SGO, Kajaani)

Research and Project Services

DIRECTOR: Emma Pirilä

SUPPORT IN FACULTIES AND RESEARCH UNITS

Jani Haapakoski (FHum, OBS)
Terhi Kuusisto (FEP)
Sanna Uusitalo (TECH)
Päivi Tomperi (SCI, Oulanka, Sodankylä, Kajaani, KSI)
Marianne Hiltunen (ITEE)
Mirko Maksimainen (FMED, FBMM, Biocenter)
Johanna Ek (OUAS)
Marjo Leinonen (OUAS)

- Pre-grant support for applicants in research funding instruments.
- Coordination responsibilities of the most important national and international research funding instruments at organisational level.
- Project management services

BACK OFFICE

Kirsi Ojutkangas (EU funding; HE Pillar II)
Pirjo Koivusaari (EIC, reporting)
Monika Luukkonen (ERC, MSCA)
Irja Ruokamo (PM support)
Jaana Toivola (PM support)
Seija Kemppainen (contracts)
Anna-Sofia Heikkinen (EU advocacy)

- Coordination and support for EU funding instruments (Horizon, ERC, MSCA etc.)
- Research funding newsletter
- Reporting to the university management
- Support and coordination for university level proposals (PROFI, Flagship etc.).
- Coordination of EU lobbying

CONTACT firstname.lastname@oulu.fi
tutkimuksen.tukipalvelut@oulu.fi

SUBSCRIBE TO RESEARCH FUNDING NEWSLETTER

Support actions

BEFORE

- Newsletter
- Research funding infos
- Annual call deadline schedules
- Funding possibilities in different career stages and units
- Support in finding suitable funding.

PREPARATION

- Reviewing and commenting of proposals
- Proposal preparation:
  - Support in starting a project proposal.
  - Annotated templates of proposal documents and examples of chapters describing e.g. the organisation, management or technological readiness level (TRL)
  - Support with administrative forms
  - Support in building a consortium
-

IMPLEMENTATION

- Organising internal kick-off meetings
- Interpretation of instructions
- Participation in negotations
- Support for reporting
- The contract process and signatures together with legal services
- Project management services

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Research and Project Services

Support for researchers in all career stages!

- Scouting of research funding opportunities
- Preparation of funding proposals
- Review and signature of research contracts
- Support with starting a new project
- Research related EU lobbying

CONTACT tutkimuksen.tukipalvelut@oulu.fi

Research support at Patio

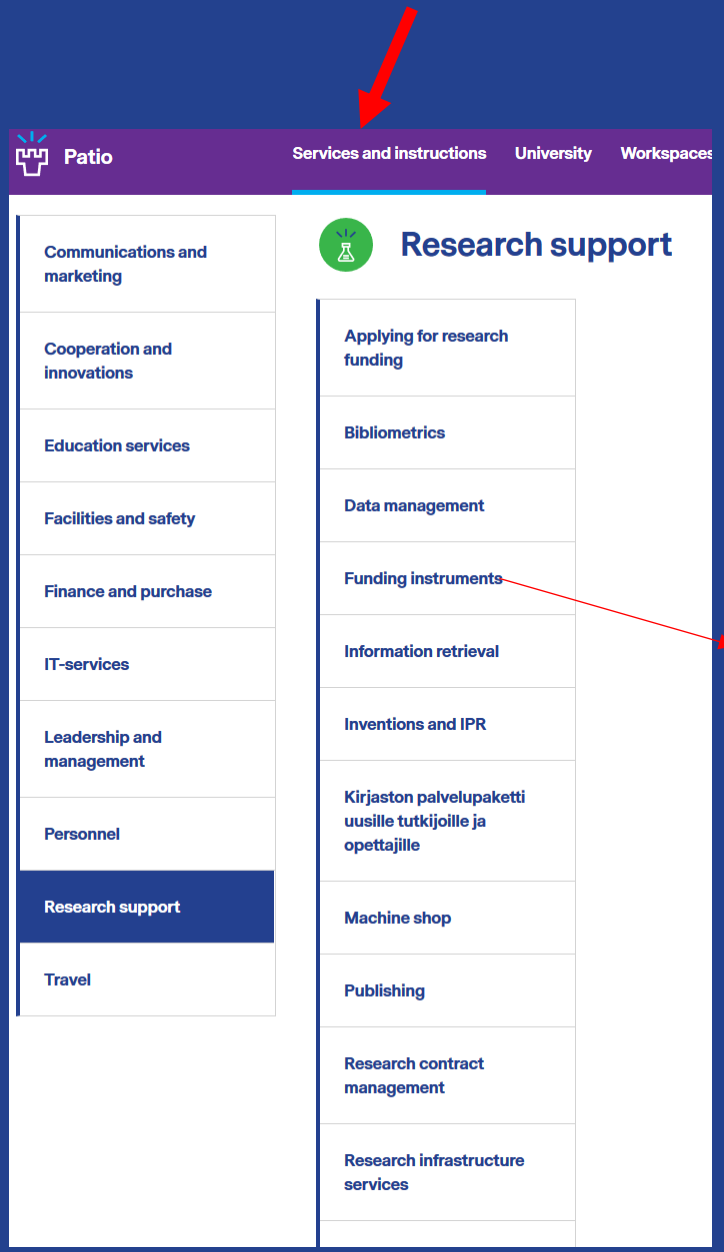
https://patio.oulu.fi/en/services-and-instructions/research-support

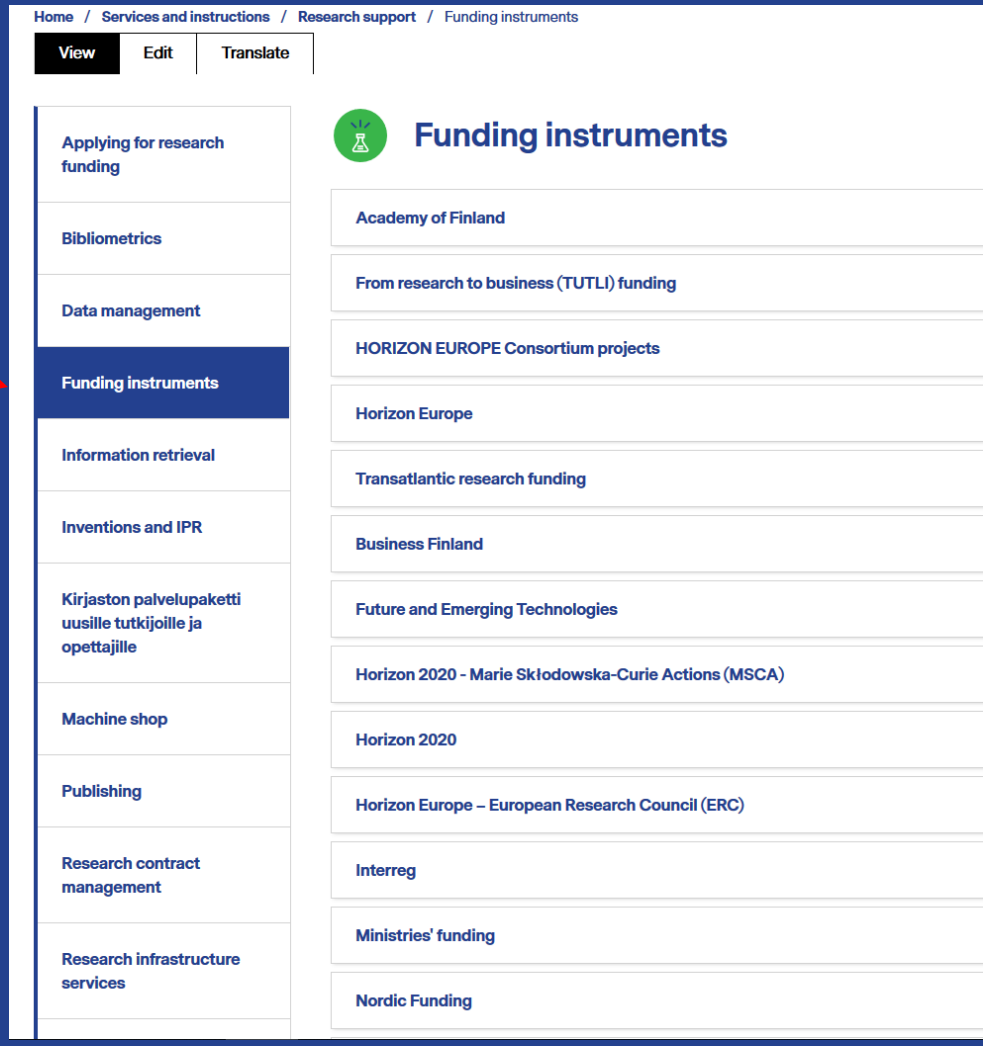
Applying for research funding:

https://patio.oulu.fi/en/services-and-instructions/research-support/applying-research-funding

Funding instruments:

https://patio.oulu.fi/en/services-and-instructions/research-support/funding-instruments





Research Council of Finland

Research Council of Finland winter call 2025 support

- **Synopsis workshop** (all applicants)
- **Winter call info session & responsible science** (all applicants)

- **Academy Camp** (Academy Research Fellow applicants)
  - Background and signifigance
  - Implementation, research team, responsible science
  - CV + increased merits and competencies, use of AI in applications
  - Budgeting
  - Online system SARA, Q & A session

- **FSci: Proposal reading sessions** (Academy Research Fellow applicants)

Horizon Europe

HORIZON EUROPE

SPECIFIC PROGRAMME: EUROPEAN DEFENCE FUND

Exclusive focus on defence research & development

- Research actions
- Development actions

SPECIFIC PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTING HORIZON EUROPE & EIT*

Exclusive focus on civil applications

Pillar I
EXCELLENT SCIENCE

- European Research Council
- Marie Skłodowska-Curie
- Research Infrastructures

Pillar II
GLOBAL CHALLENGES & EUROPEAN INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS

Clusters

- Health
- Culture, Creativity & Inclusive Society
- Civil Security for Society
- Digital, Industry & Space
- Climate, Energy & Mobility
- Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Environment

- Joint Research Centre

Pillar III
INNOVATIVE EUROPE

- European Innovation Council
- European Innovation Ecosystems
- European Institute of Innovation & Technology*

WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND STRENGTHENING THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA

- Widening participation & spreading excellence
- Reforming & Enhancing the European R&I system

EURATOM

- Fusion
- Fission
- Joint Research Center

* The European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) is not part of the Specific Programme

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European Research Council (ERC) Grants

Support process at the University of Oulu 2025

European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

What are the ERC grants?

European Research Council (ERC) Grants are prestigious funding schemes designed to support groundbreaking research in any scientific field. They encourage ambitious projects and innovative approaches led by excellent researchers.

Key Features:

- **Investigator-driven:** Focused on ideas proposed by the researchers themselves.
- **Frontier research:** Aims to push the boundaries of knowledge and address key scientific challenges.
- **Excellence:** Selection is based on the quality of the project and the Principal Investigator (PI).

Read more:
https://erc.europa.eu/apply-grant

erc European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

ERC Grants – eligibility

European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

- **ERC Starting Grant**: > 2 and ≤ 7 years from first PhD (EUR 1.5 million, 5 years)
- **ERC Consolidator Grant**: > 7 and ≤ 12 years first PhD (EUR 2 million, 5 years)
- **ERC Advanced Grant**: No time limit (EUR 2.5 million, 5 years),
- **ERC Synergy Grant**: No time limit (EUR 10 million, 6 years)

Extra funding (ERC STG, COG & ADG): Additional funding up to EUR 1 million (for large equipment purchases).

Extra funding (ERC SYG): up to EUR 4 million

Starting Grant	Consolidator Grant
A competitive Starting Grant Principal Investigator should have already shown evidence of the potential for research independence, for example by having produced at least one important publication as main author or without the participation of their PhD supervisor.	A competitive Consolidator Grant Principal Investigator should have already shown evidence of research independence.

Why should you apply for the ERC?

- Anyone who is building a serious and ambitious research career should apply for the ERC.
- The success rate is often higher than, for instance, with the Research Council of Finland.
- ERC grants are so-called bottom-up funding. This means that researchers have the freedom to propose their own research topics rather than having to align with predefined themes or priorities set by the funding body.

ERC Support Process

Pre-support

- Eligibility check
- Bibliometric data search (if needed)
- ERC info and training events
- ERC Accelerator Programme

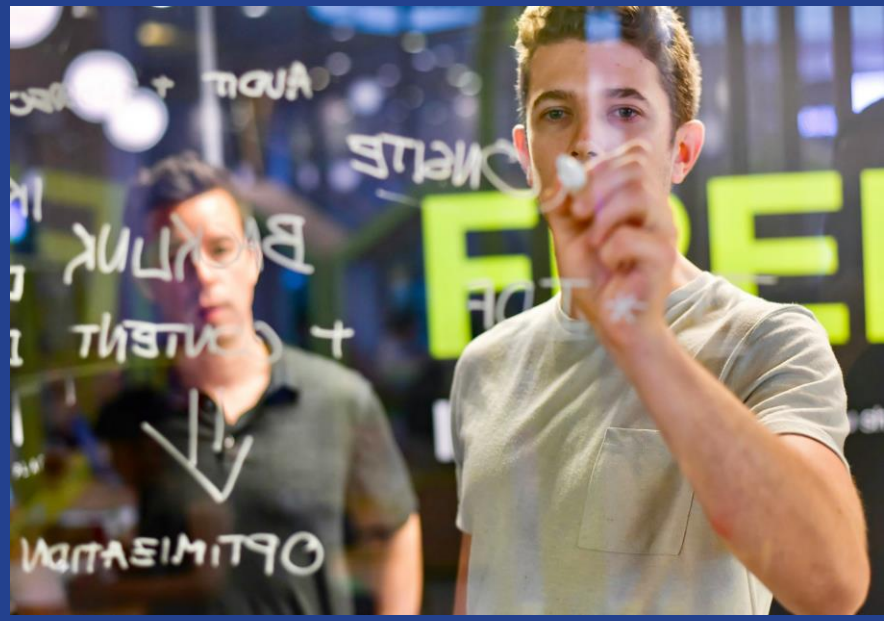
- **REGISTRATION TO OUR SUPPORT PROCESS**

NEW: ERC Accelerator Programme

The ERC Accelerator Programme is meant for especially early-career researchers (but more advanced researchers who have not applied for ERC funding are more than welcome to join) to learn to create innovative research concepts suitable for ERC calls. The Accelerator Programme aims to get creative juices flowing and support the participants in creative research idea(s) formation in this 3-session workshop series **REGISTRATION**

Session 1 – Let's get started (17 Feb 2025)

- What are the ERC grants?
- Some ERC grantee videos and other materials as examples, etc.
- Inspirational videos, e.g., on creativity and innovation
- Warm-up exercises/activities/design sprint or other creativity-boosting methods



Session 2 – What are ERC-level ideas (17 Mar 2025)

- Inspirational speech from Lotte Jaspers (Yellow Research): *How high do you have to aim? What is blue skies research? How do you know if your idea is ambitious enough for an ERC application?* (1 hour)
- What it means to be a PI in a research project (you will have a research project perhaps for the first time when you will lead a research team)
- Group activities, discussions (e.g. talking about what holds one back from aiming high)

Session 3 – Working on your idea/concept (14 Apr 2025)

- There is no need to prepare or have a real research idea or concept in mind; during this session, we will work on individual (ambitious) research ideas
- You can have an imaginative or real research concept that you will work on to develop into an ERC-level application concept.
- You can discuss your idea with research funding specialists
- Introduction of the ERC applicants' support process at the University of Oulu

ERC Support Process

European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

- The Research Support Services offer a support process before submitting the application:
  - Monthly meetings (researcher, ERC research funding specialist, faculty research funding specialist, scientific mentors) during the application period
  - UOULU annotated application templates and budgeting template
  - Review by an expert outside the University of Oulu (optional)
  - Review by an outside ERC consultancy company (offered to selected applicants: **6 x StG, CoG, AdG and 2 x SyG**)
  - Research funding specialists can offer comments on the application
  - Some faculties may offer graphic design support (internal or outside)
  - **Successful ERC Applications Reading Day on 27.5.2025**
    - **Tuesday 27 May at 9-12**
    - **Tuesday 27 May at 13-16:**
  - **Online ERC training by Yellow Research, 19.-20.5.2025 (9-12 am)**
  - An inspiring academic writing webinar, August?

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ERC Support Process

European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

- For those who get to the interview stage of the application process, the Research Support Services can organise interview coaching tailored to the needs of the PI:
  - *In-house mock panel interview*: the aim of the mock panel is to simulate the interview situation and provide the PI(s) the possibility to practice the presentation and receive questions and feedback from peers on the scientific part of the ERC proposal.
  - *Presentation skills coaching*: presentation practice sessions, including practice with Webex
  - *Graphic designer services*: to finalise the look and feel of the presentation

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ERC calls in 2025

- **ERC Advanced Grant (ERC-ADG-2025)**: 22 May - 28 August 2025
- **ERC Starting Grant** (ERC-STG-2026): DL not yet published (may close in October 2025)
- **ERC Synergy Grant** (ERC-SYG-2026): DL not yet published (may close in November 2025)
- **ERC Consolidator Grant** (ERC-COG-2026): DL not yet published (may close in January 2026)

MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships

Support process at the University of Oulu 2025

Marie Sklodowska Curie /Postdoctoral fellowships

- MSCA PF aim to enhance the creative and innovative potential of **researchers holding a PhD (max. 8 years**), wishing to acquire new skills through advanced training, international, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral mobility. Applications will be made jointly by the researcher and the university (supervisor)

- all research fields (bottom up), (12-) 24 months

Mobility rule: Recruited researchers must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the recruiting beneficiary for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before the call deadline

Next call: April 4 – September 10 , 2025

Marie Sklodowska Curie /Postdoctoral fellowships

Two types:

1. **European Postdoctoral Fellowships.** They are open to researchers **moving within Europe or coming to Europe from another part of the world** to pursue their research career. These fellowships take place in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country and can last between 1 and 2 years. Researchers of any nationality can apply.

2. **Global Postdoctoral Fellowships.** They fund the **mobility of researchers outside Europe**. The fellowship lasts between 2 to 3 years, of which the first 1 to 2 years will be spent in a non-associated Third Country, followed by a mandatory return phase of 1 year to an organisation based in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country. Only nationals or long-term residents of the EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries can apply.

Marie Sklodowska Curie /Postdoctoral fellowships

Why apply?

- possibility for international, inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary research, also outside academic sector

- career development possibilities are huge

- salary is very competitive

- success rate is about the same as in Academy Research Fellow call

- the award is considered very presticious -> gives a boost to your CV and research career

Support currently available

- Eligibility checks
- Joint online MSCA PF kick-off event (with the University of Turku and Åbo Akademi)
- MSCA PF application support Moodle course (with application writing tips, successful application examples, videos and time schedule)
- Monthly Q&A session (jointly with the University of Turku)
- MSCA PF workshop (for applicants to collect important data for the application), introduced in 2024
- (Online) meetings for MSCA PF application creating with Research Funding Specialists
- MSCA PF application reviewing

What will be new in 2025?

New support services

- Focused MSCA PF job adverts on **EURAXESS** (help offered to research units in the drafting adverts if needed), to be placed on EURAXESS in early 2025 -> links to adverts will be sent through all possible networks
- **Videos** to support writing specific parts of the application, e.g., the impact section (especially helpful for candidates from different time zones)
- **Moodle** space (aims to be less course-like and offer various types of support material), offered together with UTURKU
- 'Recruitment' of recently arrived int. employees and COFUND applicants (if they are still eligible applicants)

More information

- Updated info on Oulu.fi -pages
- Updated MSCA Patio pages
- More Patio news about MSCA PF to encourage proposals (to encourage supervisors)
- Monthly emails (with tips and support) sent to applicants registered to the support process

Opportunities for the supervisor, their research group and the host institution

- Attract new, upcoming researchers to your research group
- Build and strengthen the connections to high-quality international research groups
- Open new lines of research and transfer of knowledge
- Learn expertise in new methodologies, techniques or skills
- Increase the international visibility and level of your group and the attractiveness of your research group/institution
- Gain experience in the management of international collaboration projects
- Improve supervisor’s CV by showing that you have hosted MSCA Postdoctoral Fellows; MSCA carries high international prestige

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowship - Support Process

EURAXESS

Adverts for MSCA PF hosting opportunities at the UOULU will be placed on the EURAXESS website in early 2025.

Support is offered to research groups for advert creation.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The University of Oulu publishes annually **a webpage to advertise UOULU as the host institution for MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships**: https://www.oulu.fi/en/msca-pf. Research groups and supervisors can use the page to contact potential candidates and tell them about the support process at UOULU.

To sign up for the support process researchers and supervisors are asked to fill in a questionnaire.

SUPPORT PROCESS STARTS

Eligibility check: Research and Project Services will help the supervisors check the technical eligibility of the candidate(s).

Info session to kick-off the MSCA PF proposal preparation.

Online course supporting the MSCA PF proposal preparation. The course platform is also used for sharing useful materials and asking and answering questions during the preparation. **Moodle opens in April every year.**

PROPOSAL PREPARATION

Proposal reviews services: Research Funding Specialists provide continuous review for those participating in the online course. Final full proposal review available on demand. Please agree the details with the Funding Specialist of your respective Faculty.

Call opens: 9.4.2025

SUBMISSION

Support for filling in the administrative parts of the proposal

Proposal Deadline: 10.9.2025

RESULT

Information on the outcome of the evaluation will be given around **February 2026**.

CONTRACTS & START

If successful, preparation of the Grant agreement: UOULU as the host institution will take care of signing the agreement with the European Commission

Start: in 2026 (tbc)

MSCA PF Kick-off in April 2025!

Jan-Mar 2025 | April 2025 | Sep 2025 | Feb 2026

Pillar 2

HORIZON EUROPE RIA/IA

ENHANCED SUPPORT FOR COORDINATORS

UNIVERSITY OF OULU

Research and Project Services

HORIZON EUROPE

SPECIFIC PROGRAMME: EUROPEAN DEFENCE FUND

Exclusive focus on defence research & development

- Research actions
- Development actions

SPECIFIC PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTING HORIZON EUROPE & EIT*

Exclusive focus on civil applications

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Pillar II
GLOBAL CHALLENGES & EUROPEAN INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS

Clusters

- Health
- Culture, Creativity & Inclusive Society
- Civil Security for Society
- Digital, Industry & Space
- Climate, Energy & Mobility
- Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Environment

Joint Research Centre

Pillar III
INNOVATIVE EUROPE

- European Innovation Council
- European Innovation Ecosystems
- European Institute of Innovation & Technology*

WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND STRENGTHENING THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA

- Widening participation & spreading excellence
- Reforming & Enhancing the European R&I system

EURATOM

- Fusion
- Fission
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* The European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) is not part of the Specific Programme

HORIZON EUROPE IN NUMBERS in UOULU

647 proposals submitted & evaluated.

18%

SUCCESS RATE

117 projects funded.

68M

EURO FUNDING

Number 1 of Finnish HEIs in Pillar II*.

1

90 projects funded in Pillar II.

15

COORDINATED

21 proposals in coordination support and 8 funded.

38%

SUCCESS RATE

* 31.12.2024

Pirjo Koivusaari & Kirsi Ojutkangas
University of Oulu

Types of projects

	RIA Research and Innovation Action	IA Innovation Action	CSA Coordination and Support Action
What?	Establish new knowledge/ explore the feasibility of a new technology, product, process, solution	Produce plans and arrangements or design for new, latererd or improved produvcts, processes or services.	Promote cooperation among EU incl. Standardisation, dissemination, awareness-raising, communication and networking activities, policy dialogues etc.
Grant size	Typically EUR 3-15 million	Typically EUR 3-15 million	Typically EUR 1 – 5 million
Funding rate	100%	100% (for universities, but 70% for industry)	100%
Project duration	Typically 3 years	Typically 3 years	Typically 3 years

A consortium is eligible when: at least 3 partner organisations from 3 different EU or associated countries. At least one of the 3 partners must be from an EU country.

Green Transition | Digital Transition | A more Resilient, Competitive, Inclusive, & Democratic Europe

CLUSTER 1	CLUSTER 2	CLUSTER 3	CLUSTER 4	CLUSTER 5	CLUSTER 6
Health	Culture, Creativity & Inclusive Society	Civil Security for Society	Digital, Industry & Space	Climate, Energy & Mobility	Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Environment
1. Staying healthy in a rapidly changing society	7. Reinvigorating democratic governance	11. Reducing losses from natural, accidental and human-made disasters	15. Achieving global leadership in climate-neutral, circular and digitised industrial and digital value chains	21. Advancing science for a fair transition to a climate-neutral and resilient society	27. Fostering mitigation of and adaptation to climate change in areas and sectors covered by Cluster 6
2. Living and working in a health-promoting environment	8. Realising the full potential of cultural heritage, arts, and cultural and creative sectors	12. Facilitating legitimate movement of passengers and goods into the EU, while preventing illicit acts	16. Achieving technological leadership for Europe's open strategic autonomy in raw materials, chemicals and innovative materials	22. Facilitating the clean and sustainable transition of the energy and transport sectors towards climate neutrality through cross-cutting solutions	28. Putting biodiversity on a path to recovery, and protecting and restoring ecosystems and their services
3. Tackling diseases and reducing disease burden	9. Strengthening social and economic resilience and sustainability	13. Tackling crime and terrorism more effectively and increasing the resilience of infrastructures	17. Developing an agile and secure single market and infrastructure for data-services and trustworthy artificial intelligence services	23. Ensuring more efficient, sustainable, secure, and competitive renewable and decarbonised energy supply	29. Achieving healthy soils and forests, as well as clean air, fresh and marine water, whilst ensuring water resilience and the transition to a clean, competitive and circular economy and sustainable bioeconomy
4. Ensuring equal access to innovative, sustainable, and high-quality healthcare	10. Boosting inclusive growth and reducing vulnerabilities effectively	14. Increasing cybersecurity and making the online environment more secure	18. Achieving open strategic autonomy in digital and emerging enabling technologies	24. Using energy in buildings and industry in an efficient, affordable and sustainable way	30. Ensuring healthy food and nutrition security by making agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and food systems sustainable, resilient, inclusive and within planetary boundaries
5. Developing and using new tools, technologies and digital solutions for a healthy society			19. Achieving open strategic autonomy in global space-based infrastructures, services, applications, and data	25. Achieving sustainable, inclusive, and competitive transport modes	31. Sustainably developing rural, urban and
6. Maintaining an innovative, sustainable, and competitive EU health industry			20. Digital and industrial technologies driving human-centric innovation	26. Developing multimodal systems and services for climate-neutral, smart, inclusive, and safe mobility	

Figure 2 – Overview of Expected Impacts

Support processes for coordinators (Pillar II)

Full support

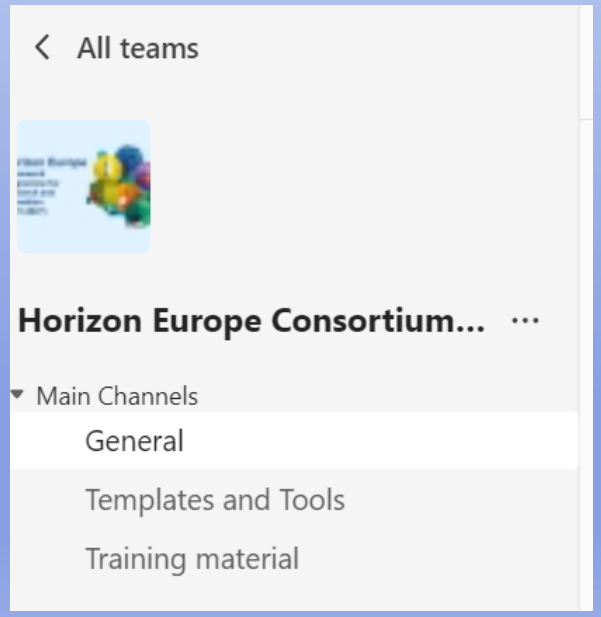
- Finding the right call & call analysis
- Trainings and tools
- 3 joint finalising sessions (1,5 days)
- Grant writing services
- A workshop on objectives, results, KPI's and impact
- Weekly meetings with the coordination team
- Upon request participation to selected consortium meetings
- Graphic designer resources to finalise infographics and pictures in the proposal
- Proposal review by an external HE consultant (subject to available strategic funds)

Light support

Can include (depending on the needs):

- General guidance
- Support with Funding & Tenders portal
- Call analysis
- Training and tools
- A workshop for ideation/conceptualisation OR matching the objectives with the call OR impact
- External consultant's comments (subject to available funds and progress of the preparation)

PROPOSAL PHASE TOOLS in Teams



- All drafts for 2025
- Proposal guide (incl. examples)
- A framework for matching objectives and results with the call's expected outcomes
- Schedule for preparation
- Gender impact assessment checklist
- Budget template(s) (planner & template for AG budgeting)
- Part A information collection form
- Teams site for proposal preparation
- Impact Helper
- Blogs on DEC, DNSH principle, impact, gender

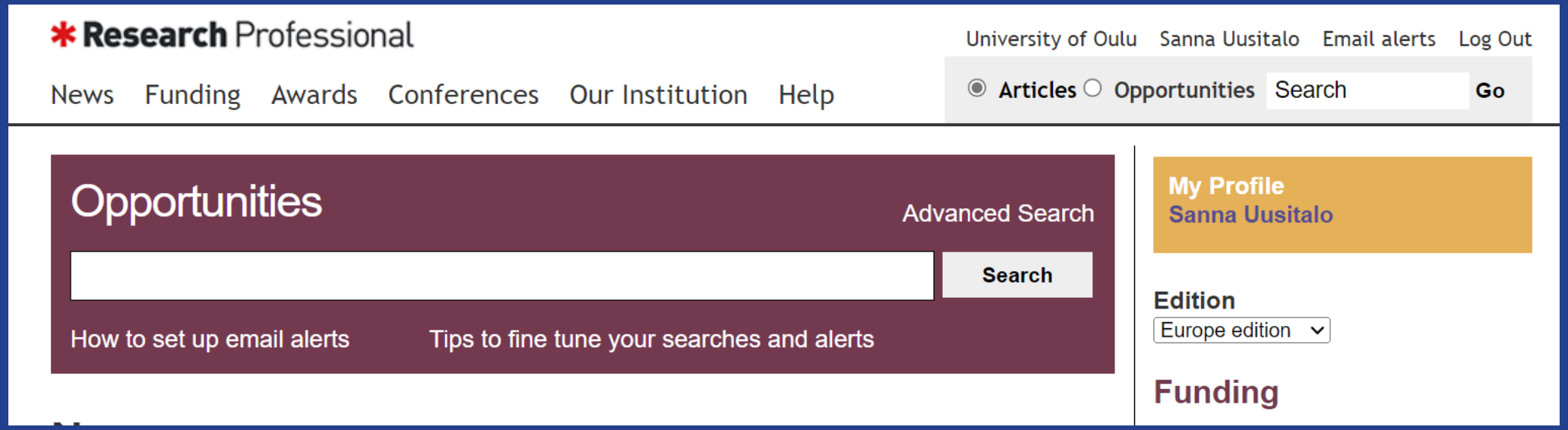
2025 Schedule

- Almost all calls open in May 2025, deadlines in September/November 2025.
- Drafts of all calls are already available in Teams: HE WP2025 Clusters 1 to 6 and missions draft summaries.xlsx

- If you want to coordinate, identification of suitable calls and finding core partners should start asap.
- Registration for full support: Deadline 7.3.2025. Internal application form

  ✓ *Call and core partners identified.*
- Starting meetings with all applicants in March.
- Start of the support process in April.

Research Professional Database



Research Professional - Home

Hint: Funding – Advanced Search – Award type – More options: Country of Funder

Research Professional Database

Science/Business

- The University of Oulu offers its employees and students free access to all the content on the Science | Business service. Science | Business offers research, industry, and policy news, reports, and newsletters that are now fully available for us. This is a great resource for those of you who want to follow the EU research arena, read news from certain research and innovation fields such as health, energy, climate, digital, or defence, or stay updated on the progress of the next EU framework planning.
-
- In addition to news services, Science | Business also organises hybrid and in-person events; if you are interested in joining them, please contact Research and Project Services (Tutkimuksen.Tukipalvelut@oulu.fi), as there are usually a limited number of seats available for each network member organisation.
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- You can access the Science | Business service: https://sciencebusiness.net/

Impact Helper

What is impact and why does it matter?

Can it be measured?

How to create and maximise impact in your research?

Why is sustainability relevant?

We will help you answer these and more questions!

GET STARTED NOW – FIND US ONLINE

www.oulu.fi/impacthelper