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Business Finland   06.03.2023

Data Economy program call for ideas

1. The background for the call

In accordance with its strategy, Business Finland has launched mission-oriented activities with two missions: "Digital Native Finland" and "Zero Carbon Future". The missions are intended to strengthen the possibilities of Finnish companies to take advantage of significant future market opportunities better than before. Missions also want to speed up societal, systemic changes and respond to global challenges. In the future, Business Finland's program activities will be strongly focused on missions.

In February 2023, Business Finland has launched a new Data Economy program related to the aforementioned "Digital Native Finland" mission. The aim of the program is to grow, strengthen and promote Finnish know-how, offer and activity in the field of data economy. The special focus is on promoting the creation of new export business through the use and sharing of data.

In order to map ideas and Finnish know-how related to the data economy, Business Finland is launching a call for ideas for RDI development projects. Exceptionally, funding is also granted for research projects. The amount of funding granted based on the application depends on the quality and competitiveness of the proposals in relation to other funding applications.

Business Finland has not made any decisions on whether to continue organizing applications for R&D development projects according to the theme of the Data Economy program after this application and whether the research funding instrument (Co-Research) will continue to be available.

2. Data Economy program's starting point and themes

In the data economy, value is created by sharing and utilizing data. The data economy opens up opportunities to develop companies' operations, services and products widely in various industries. Data sharing and a deep understanding of data utilization open up particularly interesting export business opportunities that can be exploited through new business and cooperation models.

Business Finland has launched the Data Economy program to encourage Finnish companies to utilize data in their business, to increase Finnish data economy know-how (both technological and business know-how), to support the creation of data economy innovation and business ecosystems, and to support the creation of new international growth companies that utilize data. The program focuses especially on the opportunities offered through data sharing.

Themes funded in the Data Economy program

In this call, we are looking for development projects related to the data economy, which aim to increase Finnish know-how and companies' ability to create new export business through the use and sharing of data. We are seeking for projects that research, ideate and develop new business and

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export opportunities related to the data economy, cooperation and business models, as well as value creation in networks made possible by data. In the call, we are particularly looking for projects that focus on the sharing and use of data in value networks, between organizations and also between industries. Projects can be related to, for example, data ownership, management and sharing, data marketplaces and platforms, new earning models, and the interoperability of data and different systems.

3. Schedule, process and selection criteria

Application form:
-   Applicants must use the application form in Appendix 1. The scope of applications for proposals is a maximum of 3 pages.

Timetable and Selection Process:
-   The application process opens on March 6, 2023. Applications of intent, i.e. short descriptions of the project idea, are requested to be submitted to Business Finland's registry office by April 19, 2023.
-   Business Finland evaluates applications of intent, gives applicants feedback on the application and tells whether it is recommended to send the actual funding application or not
-   The actual funding applications are requested to be sent by August 30, 2023 via Business Finland's electronic transaction service.

Selection criteria for data economy applications:
-   How does the solution to be developed or researched relate to the cooperation and business models of the data economy and their application.
-   What kind of business and export potential does the investigated solution have in the relevant time horizon.
-   Credibility and feasibility of the applicant(s) and the preliminary plan.
-   Connections to the goals and networks of the EU data economy, the identified path for utilizing EU funding.

4. Funding instruments of the actual funding application phase:

Business Finland's normal Co-Research and Co-Innovation funding instruments are used to fund the actual applications. From the beginning of 2023, Business Finland has reformed the funding aimed at research organizations and for joint projects between them and companies. Applicants who have made it through the proposal round are advised by Business Finland's contact persons, with whom the idea can be further refined together before the final funding application is submitted.

-   **Research projects (Co-Research)**
    Exceptionally, this call also funds joint research projects of individual research organizations or a few research organizations.

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- o   The project requires international networking and a vision of how the concept can be continued and expanded with EU funding.
- o   The commitment of companies to fund the research project and work in the steering group is a necessary condition and an indication of the industrial interest and significance of the researched topic. Representatives of several companies are required to participate in project steering groups and project financing (min 3). In the actual application phase, the amount and quality of the commitment of companies and other users are key issues to consider.
- o   https://www.businessfinland.fi/en/for-finnish-customers/services/funding/cooperation-between-companies-and-research-organizations/co-research

- **Co-Innovation joint project of research organizations and companies[1]:**
  - o   The project involves one or more research organizations and at least three companies, of which at least two are applying for funding from Business Finland. Companies can also form a Co-Innovation project together without a research organization.
  - o   https://www.businessfinland.fi/en/for-finnish-customers/services/funding/cooperation-between-companies-and-research-organizations/co-innovation

5. How to apply for funding

Idea/intention applications prepared according to the format and headings of Appendix 1, with a maximum length of 3 pages, must be sent by April 19, 2023 by e-mail to kirjaamo@businessfinland.fi or using a secure connection https://asiointi.businessfinland.fi/suojaposti.

By sending an idea to Business Finland, the applicant gives Business Finland permission to link together idea senders whose ideas are close to each other or could benefit from further development of the idea together. If the sender of the idea does not want such a link to take place for his own idea, the sender is asked to mention this clearly in his message to Business Finland.

Please take the following into account:

- In the subject field of the e-mail, the applicant and the case ID must be clearly indicate:

  "APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION: Data Economy call for ideas **BF/3/35/2023**"

- The **maximum size of an e-mail including attachments is 9 MB**.

- Files can be compressed (Winzip). The files should primarily be delivered as .pdf and .tif documents. It is also possible to deliver the files as .rtf files and Word .doc and .docx files, Excel .xls and .xlsx files and Powerpoint .ppt and .pptx files. When sending by e-mail, the proposal is considered to have been received by Business Finland when the

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[1] Co-Innovation applications can also be sent outside the application period. You can only apply for research projects within this call for ideas.

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message/messages and their attachments are available and readable in the e-mail of Business Finland's registry office.

In exceptional cases, applications can also be submitted by post or by bringing them to Business Finland's reception desk in a sealed envelope to the address:

Business Finland/Registry office
PO Box 69 (Porkkalankatu 1)
00101 Helsinki

The selected projects will continue to submit the actual funding applications through Business Finland's electronic transaction service. More detailed instructions will be sent to these applicants later.

Further information:

Timo Sorsa and Kari Koskela
E-mail addresses: firstname.lastname (at) businessfinland.fi

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APPENDIX 1: The mandatory structure for the call of intention

COVER

Project name:	
Name of the main applicant organization:	
Other participants (if joint project):	
Contact person (name. telephone, e-mail):	
Project budget (a preliminary estimate of the combined costs of all project participants):	
The funding applied from Business Finland (a preliminary estimate the Business Finland financial contribution, whether a loan or a grant is applied for):	

HEADLINES FOR THE CALL OF INTENTION, max 3 pages

1. What need does the idea fulfill/what problem does the idea solve?
2. What is the estimated export potential and market of the solution? For the research project: which are the companies that will potentially use the results??
   - In what time frame would the results be commercially usable?
   - Where is the best international expertise to solve the problem and how do we cooperate with them?
3. How will the issue be resolved, what issues will be researched/developed, by what means and in what time frame?
4. What competing solutions exist? What are the options today?
   - How does your research idea/innovation compare in terms of its novelty to international research and solutions on the market?
   - What kind of research has already been carried out in the matter before and by whom?