

Q&A: Rise to Challenge call 2026 (Näytönpaikka)

Application, applicants

Q: In which languages can the application be submitted?

A: The application can be submitted in Finnish, Swedish, or English.

Q: Can a single organization apply, or is a consortium required?

A: The applicant can be either a single organization or a consortium.

Q: Can the same research organization apply for multiple projects within the same call?

A: Yes.

Q: Can the same researcher apply for multiple projects within the same call?

A: There are no strict rules regarding this. However, it should be considered how successfully a researcher can develop several different world-class ideas. If the researcher's role in the project is minimal and easily replaceable with another resource, the situation might be different. Our goal is to support substantial, significant investments that will generate new growth for Finland in the future.

Q: Do we have to use the exact template with given fonts and so on?

A: Format is free but be sure to include the content of seven given slides.

Q: What time is the preliminary proposal phase closing?

A: 3.11.2026 at 23:59

Roadmap

Q: Is the timeline 2020-2035 for the roadmap only a suggestion for a timespan or a mandatory time frame to be used?

A: The given timeline is indicative and can vary depending on industry and research theme. We want to understand on what expertise does the project build on, what will be achieved during the project and which are potential pathways for utilizing the results; timeframe for utilization.

Q: Are the required roadmaps like Veturi/Leading company roadmaps?

A: Rise to Challenge- roadmaps should visualize the large picture for years 2020–2035: a) what the research is based on, b) what will be achieved during the project and c) potential pathways and timeframe for utilising the results. How can other disciplines potentially be included, and how do you intend to establish international cooperation? What stakeholder cooperation will be developed, and how? In addition to the Business Finland project, what else is being done to promote the matter and how should the operating environment change?

Nevertheless, Veturi/leading company roadmaps are worth taking a look at. One may assume, that one option to develop further and commercialize results of a successful Rise to Challenge project is a new veturi. [Funding for leading companies and ecosystems - Business Finland](#).

Implementation Paths

Q: How is the recognition of commercial potential defined? Does it need to be demonstrated somehow?

A: There is no straightforward formula or definition for identifying commercial potential. We look for high-level research ideas that can lead to future business opportunities. Therefore, recognizing business potential is inherently case-specific and abstract. **Neocarbon** is a good example of this, incorporating aspects like future global markets and systemic change.

<https://www.businessfinland.fi/ajankohtaista/caset/2025/nain-synty-uusi-maailma-neo.carbon.energy>

Q: Do you consider it necessary to use standardized metrics, like TRL levels, market forecasts, or competitor and value chain analyses, to clarify the impact of the application? Could a systematic framework, such as the Blue Ocean Strategy, enhance the evaluation?

A: The applicant is free to choose the methodology and metrics for convincing the evaluators jury of the relevance of the research idea. TRL levels and other standard methods help us to understand the project idea if they are applicable.

Q: Does Business Finland provide support or training for planning commercialization pathways during the first phase, for example, if the research team lacks prior commercialization experience?

A: The project should focus on research. Research institutions can collaborate with partners who bring expertise in commercialization. Many research organizations also have support services to help plan the commercial utilization of results.

Role of companies

Q: What is the role of companies in projects and in preparing for the first and second phases? How much commitment from companies is expected in the first phase? Could you please clarify whether having company commitments would have positive impact or would not be taken into account for evaluating of the proposals

A: In the first phase of the call, company participation is not expected. Business Finland's Rise to Challenge projects do not require corporate co-funding or parallel projects.

Company commitments or willingness to co-fund the first stage of Rise to Challenge project probably indicates, that rather than Rise to Challenge, the research should be organized as a Co-Innovation project. So, we do not give priority to proposals based on existence or lack of company commitment at the beginning of the project.

Exploring options for company commitment is a task during the first stage (up to three years). E.g., commitment and participation of existing companies in future co-innovation projects and/or creation of new (university spin-out) companies are both possible avenues.

Q: You say that you do not need companies involved in the first stage of the application, but in the pitching powerpoint template the indicator says about companies committed as partners - so do you need to have companies involved in the application or not?

A: The template asks to describe how many companies are expected to be involved in the second phase (as e.g. steering group members). The idea is that you indicate what kind of utilizers of the results you expect to get onboard for the second phase. Company commitment is not needed in the application or first phase of the project. Indicators should be met by the end of the first stage, not in the beginning of the first stage.

Funding

Q: How much funding will be allocated to future Näytönpaikka calls?

A: Business Finland's funding authority for research is expected to increase significantly in the coming years, enabling additional funding for long-term strategic research. For the current call, 30 million euros is reserved for the first phase of projects. The call will fund 5–10 projects.

Theme/topic

Q: Are technology-driven ideas only approved? The research gap on management in various areas is topical for example. Are these kinds of ideas feasible for funding?

A: We are looking for novel and unique initiatives which have remarkable future business potential. Doesn't need to be technology driven ideas.

Q: Does the call emphasize research into new technologies, or the application of existing technologies to new uses?

A: Both approaches are possible. The technology could be old, but its novel application might require additional research. The deciding factor is impact

Q: Do you plan to fund different themes as compared to the projects that got the funding from the pilot? Or is it possible to propose a topic that is related to one of the currently funded ones - to aim at building a larger cluster on that theme?

A: We can fund the same themes as in the pilot call, but there has to be a new and different approach and additional value

Evaluation

Q: Will this involve a traditional scientific peer review or some other method?

A: According to Business Finland's standard practices, evaluations will be conducted by Business Finland's experts. In Business Finland's funding, the main focus is on relevance and impact (compared to the Academy of Finland's excellence-based peer review).

Pitchings

Q: What is the estimated number of proposals you will invite for a pitching sessions?

A: We anticipate that max 30 proposals will be invited to pitch

Foreign participants

Q: Do the consortium members need to be Finnish universities or research institutions, i.e., are foreign universities and research institutions eligible consortium members and can they receive funding from the call?

Can foreign universities and research institutions participate as collaboration partners?

A: BF funding can only be granted to Finnish organizations. International collaboration is very important in BF-funded research, meaning it can be conducted with participants funded through their own resources.

Q: Can the companies utilizing and commercializing the research be from outside Finland, elsewhere in Europe?

A: Through the Rise to Challenge call, Business Finland aims to create a foundation for future business opportunities and growth sectors for Finnish companies. Therefore, we expect that the new knowledge generated in the funded projects will be available for Finnish companies to utilize. BF evaluates the positive impacts of funding on Finnish society.

University hospitals/Wellbeing services counties

Q: Can research groups from the field of medicine, such as those from a university hospital, participate as part of a consortium?

A: University hospitals/wellbeing services counties are not considered public research organizations because research is not their primary function. Therefore, they cannot act as applicants in the NP call. However, similar to companies, they can function as subcontractors from whom a research organization purchases services.

More info: <https://www.businessfinland.fi/en/for-finnish-customers/services/funding/cooperation-between-companies-and-research-organizations/co-innovation/funding-for-university-hospitals>

Eligible costs

Q: Are there any specific guidelines for budgeting the project?

A: Cost categories and terms are identical as for [Co-Research](#) projects. Cost categories are described in detail in the Funding Terms: https://www.businessfinland.fi/4b142f/globalassets/finnish-customers/01-funding/08-guidelines--terms/funding-terms/public_research_funding.pdf

Q: Is it possible to include expensive infrastructure costs to the budget if they are essential for the project? Can there be (e.g. laboratory) investments included in the budget?

A: Our goal is not to fund infrastructure itself, but impactful research, which may require infrastructure for its execution. This is a competitive situation between different proposals, and we want to maximize the impact of Business Finland's funding. There is no specific accepted share of equipment cost. See chapter 4.8 of the funding terms https://www.businessfinland.fi/4b142f/globalassets/finnish-customers/01-funding/08-guidelines--terms/funding-terms/public_research_funding.pdf

Consortium and Team

Q: On the first round, most of the funded proposals were consortium projects. Are consortium projects preferred from single applicant ones?

A: We do not have preference on consortiums over projects carried out by a single research organization.

Q: What kind of consortium structures between research organizations do you prefer?

A: We do not have any specific preference regarding the consortium, or even requirement to have consortiums of several research organizations. You may want to consider what is the most relevant way to organize the research work to reach the objectives of the project.

A: Can you talk a bit more about the assessment of the research team(s): What international standards do you refer to? Do you value excellence in academic research or also merits in industry collaboration, entrepreneurship etc.?

Q: The team members' excellence in academic research as well as versatile expertise is highly valued, as well as merits in industry collaboration and entrepreneurship

Proven leadership and managerial skills of the team/consortium leader are important for the successful implementation of the project.

Q: Is it possible to have more than one PI from one research organization Scientific PI + Experienced project manager

A: Yes

Start of project

Q: When are funded projects expected to start, beginning of 2027, still in 2026 or is this flexible?

A: Funding decisions are foreseen to be made before summer break 2026 and projects to be started soon after that

Commitment of a host organization

Q: How are we supposed to show the top management commitment?

A: In the preliminary application phase, no separate commitment letter is needed. Describe in the power point presentation the significance of the proposed research theme to your organization.

We want to understand that this is not merely the interest of individual researchers, but that there is broader capability within organizations in this field and a willingness to increase, for example, resources over a certain period of time

The projects invited to the next stage should provide a commitment statement. The format is free, but for instance a separate commitment letter could be a good solution.

Q: About the commitment of the applicant organization: Do you want the commitment from the management level of the organization (e.g. the rector of the university) or from the project leadership level (e.g. the principal investigator of the project)?

A: We prefer commitment from the level that can secure necessary research organization own funding for the project, and that can positively influence human and other resources. So, preferably the commitment of the top management.

Intellectual Property, IP

Q: What is BF's expectation on IP ownership?

A: Please see Funding Terms and Conditions for public research, chapter 13:
www.businessfinland.fi/4b142f/globalassets/finnish-customers/01-funding/08-guidelines--terms/funding-terms/public_research_funding.pdf