

Questions and answers: FIRI Roadmap call information session, 12.3.2024

Is there a separate application for the lighthouse status? Is every Stage-2 application also considered as a lighthouse application?

No, the FIRI committee will separately select the lighthouses among the roadmap infrastructures.

Are interviews done after stage 1 or 2?

The lighthouse candidates are interviewed after stage 2 later in the autumn.

will the lighthouse interviews be in-person or via teams?

We plan to have them in-person.

What does the lighthouse status mean in terms of funding?

The lighthouses are funded like the other RIs selected on the roadmap. The aim for the lighthouses is to distinguish from the roadmap the very best RIs and give them an additional quality label.

Is no budget needed in the Stage 1?

At stage 1, the long term financial plan for the whole RI is needed as a separate appendix as part of the roadmap application. At stage 2, the budget for the development project in full cost model is needed and filled in in the on-line system.

The Tables for Long-term funding plan for research infrastructure can be modified: Will Tables be done for the whole RI or for each research organizations?

The financial plan for the whole research infrastructure should be provided. Additionally, you can use the allowed pages, one per each partner organization, to detail the cost and revenue per each organization.

The Table for Long-term funding plan for research infrastructure: What is meant by the instructions: "The structure is provided in the template (4 pages + 1 page per partner organisation)."

The table itself is just a model to show the expenditure and income of the research infrastructure. The table will be included as part of the requested annex to the application, which will be created in e.g. word and will explain on four pages for the whole research infrastructure the principles used to generate the figures in the table, how the finances, expenditure and income of the research infrastructure will be monitored, and the risk assessment related to the long-term budget plan of the infrastructure. In addition to the four pages, each of the partner organisations specifies on a separate page its own long term financial contributions in relation to the infrastructure concerned. Adding up the euros from the tables on each partner organisation's page should give the

total budget for the infrastructure as a whole, which is shown in the summary table at the beginning. This annex is attached to the application in pdf format.

Mitä tarkoitetaan pitkäjänteisen rahoitussunnitelman ohjeessa "Rakenne on annettu templaattissa (4 sivua + 1 sivu per partneriorganisaatio)."? Missä on nämä 4 + 1 sivua?

Itse taulukko on vain malli, jonka avulla tutkimusinfrastruktuurin menot ja tulot voi esittää. Taulukko laitetaan osaksi pyydettyä hakemuksen liitettä, joka luodaan esim. word:ssa ja jossa neljällä sivulla selvitetään koko tutkimusinfrastruktuurin osalta mitä periaatteita taulukon lukujen tuottamisessa on käytetty, miten tutkimusinfrastruktuurin taloutta, menoja ja tuloja seurataan, sekä millainen on infrastruktuurin pitkän aikavälin talousarviosuunnitelmaan liittyvä riskinarviointi. Neljän sivun lisäksi jokainen osapuoliorganisaatio erittelee omalla sivullaan oman toimintansa kyseiseen infrastruktuuriin talouden näkökulmasta. Kun osapuoliorganisaatioiden sivuilta lasketaan taulukoista eurot yhteen, pitäisi tulla koko infrastruktuurin kokonaisbudjetti, joka on esitetty yhteistaulukossa alussa. Tämä liite liitetään hakemukseen pdf-muodossa.

What is "economic activity"? Are clinical research services / clinical research (by contracts with payments) for sponsor companies classified as such activity?

Economic activity is defined as all activity where goods or services are offered on an open market regardless of whether profits are pursued or generated. When an organisation is also engaged in economic activities, separate accounts must be kept of the funding and costs of and the revenue generated by such activities.

Are some applications reviewed differently?

All applications go through the same review process.

What is the capacity or percentage of applications how much can be included in the roadmap?

There will be less research infrastructures on the Finnish RI roadmap than there currently is, but this cannot be estimated how much.

For how many years / for how long is the funding applied at this point?

For maximum five years (2025-2029).

Is there a maximum amount of money to be applied for?

No, there is not.

I am confused about the "minimum" amounts for consortia. There were two figures on the slides, 100 k and 600 k. Which is it? Can you comment on the minimum amount of funding per candidate or consortium partner?

The same rules as before: The recommended minimum amount for the Research Council of Finland's contribution to an individual application is 200,000 euros. The

recommended minimum amount for the Research Council's contribution to a consortium subproject is 100,000 euros and 600,000 euros for the whole consortium.

Will you always grant the applied amount or will you negotiate for a lower sum like some other RI funding organizations in other countries?

In principle we try to fund the applied amount. But it might be possible that we need to adjust the budgets in case we are in the tight situation with the funds. In those cases, we will contact the applicants.

What is needed to confirm discussions with the stakeholders - are Lols needed?

Lols or other letters are not asked. Description in the Activity plan is needed.

How is impact measured?

Applicants should tell in the application how they, in the particular research infrastructure, measure, or will measure, the impact. Impact section is evaluated by the international panel. More guidelines here: [FIRI2024 Stage 1 Template](#)

so the organisation that is not an obvious research organisation like university or research institute could apply if it can fulfill the definition and can justify it?

yes!

Can you give an example of a "proper" research infrastructure service provided by a RO outside the own organisation, what are main characteristics?

Characteristics of national research infrastructure can be found in the call text.

What funding of the research organization should be highlighted in the row 1 (Host university/research institute's own funding for the research infrastructure) of Table 2 ([Long-term funding plan for research infrastructure](#))? 30 percent commitment or something else?

Something else, namely the long-term strategic commitment of the organization to the basic and sustainable organization and operation of the research infrastructure. Staff scientists, access management, technicians, other running costs etc. 30% commitment for the full cost model concerns the stage 2 and the development project.

Will those research infrastructures which are now part of ESFRI, included to this roadmap?

The Finnish activities contributing to these ESFRI RIs can apply to be on the roadmap, avoiding overlaps and parallel activities with other Finnish research infrastructures.

Just to clarify: are research infrastructures where Finland is a member by contract also included in this call (e.g. MAX IV)? Previously international contract RI have not been part of roadmap.

If such an infrastructure wants to apply for development project funding, they need to submit a roadmap application. (The membership fees are not part of this roadmap call.)

Do international infras need to apply for the roadmap to get funding?

Yes

How are the decisions of funding divided: can you tell use who gets to know the decision in December 24 and who in January 25?

The decisions are taken in practical way. We aim to grant what is applied for, and we have mandate of 10Meur this year and ca. 40 Meur next year.

What are the panels like?

The panel members highly respected in their own disciplines, but they also have a broader understanding of major national and international research infrastructures. They will review the roadmap applications in a single panel in September 2024. Applications will be reviewed for scientific significance, versatile impact and operational maturity.

How much of the funding can go to person months of the staff, previously the recommendation has been to focus rather on instrumentation?

If the construction or significant upgrading of the research infrastructure and the formation of services are focused on the processing of large amounts of data, or if the processing of the project's data requires exceptionally much work or time, the project may apply for funding for salary costs related to the data processing. In this case, a person whose working hours are spent on data management and processing may be hired to the project. However, the funding is not intended for operating costs or permanent operating expenses.

What kind of personnel costs are eligible for funding? You mentioned personnel costs (construction, commissioning, etc.) are acceptable, but I have also understood they are seen negatively. Some equipment absolutely require significant own personnel contributions to get them operational. Can you clarify or comment, are personnel costs seen in the same way than other costs related to building/upgrading the infra?

The personnel costs are eligible if they are linked to the development and upgrading the services and other eligible costs that can be applied.

Please clarify the budget template: Firstly, is it 1 page per partner organisation; secondly, where do we give the additional explanations, somewhere in the appendix? There is no section in the action plan to discuss budget.

The length of the long-term budget plan is in total max. 4 pages + 1 page per partner organization allowed. You can use the model table in showing the figures in the table. In addition to the table, briefly explain the expenditure and revenue of the research infrastructure and the principles used to produce the figures in the table, how the numbers were obtained. Include brief explanation of the monitoring of expenditure and revenue and a risk assessment of the long-term budget plan. This is obligatory appendix to be attached in the application as one PDF.

The prioritisation will be replaced by longterm funding plan... so will there need to be somekind on financial (in EUR) commitment from the organisations? Or What does this mean in practice for the 1st application stage?

The organisations, that are the applicants will commit to the whole application which includes the long-term financial plan.

Is the budget considered in the first stage? Can it be a reason not to proceed into the second stage?

Long-term, sustainable and convincing financial plan of the whole research infrastructure is one criterion for the national roadmap research infrastructure. Budget of the development project is part of the stage 2 application.

Are there any thematic preferences when it comes to choosing the infrastructures on the roadmap?

No thematic preferences.

If there is no differentiation between multi-disciplinary RIs and the more limited ones. What happens when the SA committees are assessing the plans? Do the application go to one committee or to all that are relevant?

To all that are relevant.

How the operational maturity of RI influences - what is here considered positive?

This depends on the lifecycle phase. As an example, if the RI applicants tell the RI is on operative phase but there are no concrete actions or delivery, then it is not convincing.

Am I right in assuming that even though the int'l panel does not review the budgets as such, the second-phase budget cannot differ too much from the 1st phase planning? So if you get a 5-6 with X € total budget and activities, you cannot stipulate in the second phase that actually you need 5X to really perform this...?

Yes, that is correct. The funding of the so-called development project has to be outlined and estimated in the stage 1.

I am confused about the prioritisation vs long-term strategic planning. Earlier, universities made an internal prioritisation list and the best applications were given the permission to apply RI funding. Is this internal prioritisation no longer used? And universities provide nowadays long-term strategic planning commitment for all applications? Or how is this done now? No internal ranking at all?

OK we have tried to simplify the process. The organisations are actually showing their commitment many times in the process. First, especially bigger organisations have their own selection rounds before the RIs are given the permissions to apply. Secondly, the organisations will give commitment in the online services to the whole application that includes the long-term funding plan. Therefore, the prioritisation is not included to the call this time.

What kind of commitments from the host institution are needed in the long-term financial plan?

The host institution(s) give organizational commitment for the whole infrastructure roadmap application, which includes the long-term financial plan.

Will the panel comments be available to the applicant?

Yes, they will.

Risk management plan only for the project? Not for the national research infrastructure?

There will also be risk management plan asked in the roadmap application at stage 1. More guidelines here: [FIRI2024 Stage 1 Template](#)

Are data storage and computational facilities funded? or should they be included in the host contributions?

Only when you are constructing such facilities, they can be included to the application. FIRI funding is intended to cover the investment costs of the research infrastructure, such as construction or major upgrading of equipment and systems, the development of data management and the establishment and development of services and skills.

The funding may also be granted to cover salary costs, if the tasks of the person to be hired are linked to the functions described above.

The funding is not intended for operating costs or permanent operating expenses.

Those application that get the review score 5-6 gets to the next stage. What kind of criteria are used to select the ones that get to the roadmap from these?

The roadmap and subsequent funding decisions of the FIRI Committee are primarily based on:

- expert review reports and the information provided in the application
- opinions of the Research Council of Finland's scientific councils.

In addition to the above, the FIRI Committee will, at its discretion, take into account the objectives of the long-term plan for research infrastructures for national and international research infrastructure activities and their overall development. The FIRI Committee will make decisions on the selected lighthouse infrastructures based on a possible interview and the characteristics set for lighthouses. Lighthouse status is not applied for separately. Additionally, the decisions will be prepared considering the Research Council of Finland's criteria for research funding decisions and other guiding policies. Read about how funding decisions are made.

Can there be overlapping funding with existing FIRI funding (e.g. if positive funding decision was received this January)

Yes. If the research infrastructure has ongoing infrastructure funding granted by the Research Council, it may for justified reasons be awarded additional funding in the stage 2. The need for the funding will be further justified in the stage 2 application. The stage 2 action plan must also describe the connection to previously granted funding.

Is the current FIRI funding (progress report) considered in the 1st or the 2nd stage of the application?

In the stage 2, when the development project funding application is submitted.

so second stage application is only open 4th-22nd October? Will there be more information prior to that?

All the call information is now published and available.

How about international membership fees? Will there be call for the current memberships, for renewal of them? Or it depends on the roadmap now?

For the old memberships, there will be a separate call organised most likely next year, but as it was said no decisions have been made on this yet.

Will there be a call for non-roadmap national level RIs in the future?

Those calls are not planned.

Is the plan that the whole 5-year funding for the selected infrastructures will be granted in these two decisions (2025-2027 and 2027-2029) and there would not be as many (or any?) additional calls for further funding during the period as before? This seems to be so but I have not found it clearly stated.

Most likely there are no additional calls for further funding during the period. However, the funding situation is not 100% clear for many years ahead.

Excluding memberships from this call sounds like that RI's where Finland is a member, are excluded from the roadmap. Roadmap as strategic document that defines the RI's that are strategically important for Finland should also include an analysis of the international large-scale RI membership landscape.

In the Roadmap, the international memberships will be listed.