

# Leverage from the EU for **expertise and innovations**

**Structural Fund period 2007–2013**



European Union  
European Regional Development Fund  
European Social Fund

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# Leverage from the EU for expertise and innovations

Finland is one of the world's most competitive countries. It is important for the whole country's well-being that Finnish expertise succeeds and develops continually in intensifying competition, also in the future. High levels of expertise, new innovations and continuous development play key roles in keeping Finland vigorous. Strengthening expertise and support for innovations are also some of the focuses of the European Union's fund programmes. This brochure describes how the EU supports the challenges associated with the development of expertise and innovations.

Supplementary funding is granted from the European Union's Structural Funds for activities that improve Finnish expertise, employment and competitiveness. The objective is also to develop equal opportunities for people and regions. The aim is to ensure that Finland is a country with employment, skilled people, and a favourable atmosphere for new ideas and successful companies as well as a good environment in which to make a home, to live and to work.

Many companies need external capital or other assistance in, for example, the development phase, commercialisation or foreign export of ideas and products. Innovations can be born in an instant, but often in their background lies long-term work based on experience and expertise.



# Support for the development of expertise and innovations from the EU's Structural Funds

The EU funds Finnish projects that are related to the development of expertise or innovations. The EU grants support from two Structural Funds: The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). The policy guidelines of the funds determine the key objectives of the programmes and the projects to be funded.

**The European Regional Development Fund** funds innovation systems that support the development of ideas and products and international networks. They are used, for example, to disseminate know-how and productise the best ideas. In addition, research services, development services and innovation services are developed, and assistance is given to the research and product development projects of companies.

**The European Social Fund** supports e.g. the provision of education that responds to the needs of working life and the acceleration of the transition to working life following studies. Individuals trained via the assistance can develop their expertise, and the Finnish educational system can respond better to the needs of working life and the demand for labour. Companies and educational institutions can also develop expertise in cooperation, which is needed, for example, in the analysis and productisation of new ideas. ESR funds can also be used to develop social innovations, such as for example new ways of operating in communities and networks of actors.



Funds from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) are used to support networking connected to skills.



# Effects on the environment, cooperation and equality under a magnifying glass

The evaluation of environmental impacts is an essential part of projects that receive assistance from the EU. The best for the environment is achieved when the environmental impacts of projects – both good and bad – are recognised already at the stage when the projects are chosen. Finland’s own legislation also requires that the impacts of projects on the environment are assessed.

Cooperation at different levels – such as between the parties that implement the projects, the authorities, industry and commerce, other organisations – takes place at all stages of the projects. Partnership and doing things together are encouraged both during the planning of projects and during the implementation phase.

The promotion of equality in all of society, such as between the sexes, and between people of different ages and population groups, is also one of the criteria of EU assistance. In addition, national legislation requires that attention be paid to gender equality in the implementation of projects.

## Modern logistics training as an attraction of a municipality

Taivalkoski Forestry College took a big leap forward as a centre for skills and development in logging. As information technology systems were being upgraded, there was a natural need for staff training in working life. The “Logistics training for forestry” project was used to develop training in logging to meet the needs of working life today in the sector, and to improve the professional skills of forestry employees

and the teachers of Taivalkoski Forestry College.

At the same time, a virtual learning environment was constructed through a second project to provide training in procurement, training and testing in logging. The virtual learning environment is made up of guillotine cutter simulators that are important in studies and a computer classroom including its software.

The target for the number of participants in the information technology training organised in the project was exceeded by a wide margin. The project has also furthered sustainable development because the environmental load of lumbering is decreasing due to improved logistics and control of automation.

“Although heading two projects simultaneously forces you to look at

# EU assistance is directed via programmes

Programmes, through which EU assistance is directed, are approved for a seven-year period. The current period covers the years 2007–2013. EU funding has been reserved separately for each year.

The funding of the European Regional Development Fund is distributed during the 2007–2013 period via five regional programmes in southern, eastern, western, and northern Finland, and in Åland. The programmes are based on the development needs of each region. The programmes define the strategy, measures and funding directed at them, as well as indicators to measure the results of the operations.

In mainland Finland the funding of the European Social Fund is distributed via one programme that is divided between a nationwide part and regional parts. The programmes are described in more detail in programme-specific brochures.

yourself in the mirror, I am very satisfied that I undertook the task of project manager. I have learned many new things and formed good contacts. I have also been asked to serve as a trainer in national training events,” says **Jouni Kortetjärvi** from Taivalkoski Forestry College, who led the four-year project. “Our virtual learning environment has even been an attraction for visitors to the municipality of Taivalkoski.”



A scientist in a white lab coat is shown in profile, holding a small, dark vial with a white cap. The background is a deep blue with a blurred figure of the scientist. In the top right corner, there is a white graphic consisting of many thin, curved lines that resemble a stylized wave or a network of connections.

Enterprises, educational institutions, research institutes, municipalities, and other societies or their combinations can apply for funding for their projects from the EU.



# Further information

## What does EU assistance mean in practice?

In practice, EU assistance means that part of the public funding allocated to a project is EU funding either from the European Regional Development Fund or European Social Fund and part is national public funding. In addition to the public assistance, the project must also include the financing provided by the party implementing the project. The type and amount of assistance varies depending on the public financier, content of the project and national legislation.

## Who can apply for EU assistance?

Enterprises, educational institutions, research institutes, municipalities, and other societies or their combinations can apply for funding for their projects from the EU.

## Where can EU assistance be applied for and where is additional information available?

Public financiers describe the procedures for applying for funding, and the possible application periods, on their own Internet pages. Contact information for the financiers is listed at the end of the brochure.

# For what kinds of projects can assistance be applied for from the European Regional Development Fund?

Additional capital may be needed for the product development of a new idea, or assistance may be needed for the marketing of a product. Functioning information systems and networking are needed for the dissemination of the ideas of companies operating in remote areas. The European Regional Development Fund supports regional projects that make the productisation and economic utilisation of innovations easier and creates networks between expert actors. When at the same time data communication lines and services, for example, are improved, the ideas produced and the experience gained can also be utilised in networks.

The funding of the European Regional Development Fund is used to

- improve the transfer of technology and expertise
- create cooperation networks between enterprises, educational institutions and research institutes
- promote the internationalisation of actors
- further the research and development services of universities and polytechnics
- improve the environments that support research and education
- developing knowledge and cultural structures
- develop telecommunications services and contents
- improve equal access to information society services



# For what kinds of projects can assistance be applied for from the European Social Fund?

In addition to the European Regional Development Fund, EU funding is also available from the European Social Fund (ESF) for projects related to expertise and innovations. The projects involve individuals, work communities and labour markets. It is an indication of the importance of the subject that projects connected to expertise and innovation are funded throughout Finland.

The European Social Fund has a programme that covers all of Finland and is divided between a national part and four regional parts. In addition, Åland has its own programme. The funding of the European Social Fund is used to prevent marginalisation, develop the expertise of company personnel, and develop systems that ease the operations of the labour market and activate people to participate and work.

The funding of the European Social Fund is used to

- improve job creation for young people and boost the numbers of young people entering education
- improve the competence, expertise and working conditions of employees
- develop social innovations
- forecast educational needs at the regional and local level
- create innovation environments and networks
- develop knowledge and cultural structures
- facilitate the transition from education to working life
- develop the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training
- support the further education of employees and students, and their training to change roles
- encourage cooperation between organisations and researchers
- promote equality between the sexes, and sustainable development

# What do I need to do to get EU assistance

If you have an idea for a project to develop expertise and innovations for which you would like to seek EU funding, you can proceed as follows:

- Get together a group of people who are interested in the idea and who are willing to develop the idea further. Include people who are directly concerned with the development. Ensure that your idea has the support of your own organisation and of the required partners.
- Contact a public financier operating in your region so you can discuss your initiative. It is a good idea to get in touch with financiers right at the planning stage of the project, so that it will move smoothly in the right direction.
- In addition to the EU programmes, find out about the regional strategic programmes and their implementation plans.

## What should you do if the customer turns violent?

Violence poses a threat to increasingly many employees in the service sector. It is a good idea to acquire information and skills about how to deal with a possible encounter with a violent customer. The ESF-funded AVEKKI project developed a model for training and action for the advance prevention and management of violent situations, especially in health care.

“Although the AVEKKI project got its start from the needs of the

health care sector, it can be applied in whole to other sectors too, such as the social welfare sector, education, the social work of the church, and the safety sector,” says Project Manager **Seija Taattola**. Satisfied graduates of AVEKKI have already applied what they have learned to the needs of school staff, for example.

A package of teaching material was also produced to support the internationally high-quality educational model. In addition, AVEKKI led

to a sub-project that started in 2006, which develops occupational safety training for the emergency services sector. At the present time, the work of the project includes, for example, the design, together with the Police Technology Centre, of KILPI protective clothing for emergency services tasks and the transportation of patients.

Savonia University of Applied Sciences has led the project since 2005. The project gathers together health



- EU funding is always granted for a project that is limited in time and in content. A project plan is always drawn up and it includes the project's content, objectives and stages, division of work, budget and financing plan, and an implementation schedule.
- The application for assistance is completed electronically using the EURA2007 system for the majority of projects. Applications for assistance granted by the Employment and Economic Development Centres, research and development financing from Tekes, and loans and guarantees from Finnvera Plc are carried

out, however, using their own application forms and procedures. Further information on submitting applications can be gained from the public financiers.

- You can find out about EU programmes and their objectives, application periods for funding and other terms and conditions on the Internet at the address [www.structuralfunds.fi](http://www.structuralfunds.fi). The page has links to the Internet sites of your own region and public financiers. Financiers also provide expert advice during the planning and start-up phases of the project.

care and safety experts from Northern Savo, such as Savo Vocational College, Niuvanniemi Hospital, Kuopio University Hospital, Varkaus Hospital, Iisalmi Hospital, the Kuopio Police Department, Kuopio University and the Emergency Services College. The role of the Emergency Services College in the project is to survey the prevalence, form and causes of violent situations and to develop passive means of protection.





# Other Financing Opportunities

The European Union also has other programmes that support expertise and innovation. Additional information about them is available from the European Union's Internet pages. Several national development programmes and support systems exist in Finland for promoting expertise and innovation; additional information about them is available from the financiers mentioned in this brochure.

The development of rural areas is supported through the Rural Development Programme. Additional information is available from the Internet pages of the

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry at [www.mmm.fi](http://www.mmm.fi) or from Employment and Economic Development Centres at [www.te-keskus.fi](http://www.te-keskus.fi).

The Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation (Tekes) also funds research and development projects through product development loans. Companies and public research units can participate in ongoing Tekes technology programmes through their own research and development projects. Additional information is available from Tekes's Internet pages at [www.tekes.fi](http://www.tekes.fi).



## FINANCIERS

Finnvera Plc  
[www.finnvera.fi](http://www.finnvera.fi)

State Provincial offices  
[www.laaninhallitus.fi](http://www.laaninhallitus.fi)

Regional Councils  
[www.reg.fi](http://www.reg.fi)

Finnish National Board of  
Education  
[www.oph.fi](http://www.oph.fi)

Road Districts  
[www.tiehallinto.fi](http://www.tiehallinto.fi)

Finnish Funding Agency for  
Technology and Innovation  
Tekes  
[www.tekes.fi](http://www.tekes.fi)

Employment and Economic  
Development Centres  
[www.te-keskus.fi](http://www.te-keskus.fi)

Regional Environment Centres  
[www.environment.fi/ayk](http://www.environment.fi/ayk)

Ministry of Transport and  
Communications  
[www.lvm.fi](http://www.lvm.fi)

Ministry of Education  
[www.minedu.fi](http://www.minedu.fi)

Ministry of the Interior  
[www.intermin.fi](http://www.intermin.fi)

Ministry of Social Affairs and  
Health  
[www.stm.fi](http://www.stm.fi)

Ministry of Employment  
and the Economy  
[www.tem.fi](http://www.tem.fi)

Ministry of the Environment  
[www.environment.fi/ayk](http://www.environment.fi/ayk)

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