



## TFK programme call for applications 2024

NB! Updated on 7 February 2024

### Table of contents

<b>1. GENERAL</b> .....	2
<b>2. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLICATION ROUND</b> .....	2
<b>2.1. BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLICATION ROUND</b> .....	2
<b>2.2. COOPERATION PROJECTS</b> .....	3
<b>2.3. INSTRUCTIONS FOR MOBILITY PERIODS</b> .....	4
<b>2.3.1. LONG-TERM STUDENT MOBILITY</b> .....	4
<b>2.3.2. SHORT-TERM STUDENT MOBILITY</b> .....	4
<b>2.3.3. STAFF MOBILITY</b> .....	5
<b>3. PROJECT COMPOSITION AND FUNDING AMOUNT</b> .....	5
<b>3.1. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS</b> .....	6
<b>3.2. COOPERATION PARTNERS' COMMITMENT LETTERS</b> .....	6
<b>4. ELIGIBILITY AND EVALUATION CRITERIA</b> .....	6
<b>4.1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA</b> .....	6
<b>4.2. EVALUATION CRITERIA</b> .....	7
<b>5. APPLICATION PROCEDURE</b> .....	8
<b>6. AGREEMENT PERIOD AND REPORTING</b> .....	8
<b>7. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</b> .....	8



## 1. GENERAL

The purpose of the Team Finland Knowledge programme is to create and strengthen cooperation between Finnish higher education institutions and the target regions and countries selected to the TFK network, and to design new operating models for cooperation. The programme funds educational cooperation between higher education institutions through cooperation and mobility projects.

The target regions and countries of the programme in 2024 are Southern Africa, Latin America<sup>1</sup>, Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam), India and China. Projects funded in the Call 2022 and Call 2023 cannot be funded in the Call 2024.

Target countries and possible priorities may vary in the future application rounds in different ways.

## 2. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLICATION ROUND

The objective of the programme is to increase the quality of higher education by strengthening the international partnerships and networks of Finnish higher education institutions and creating new initiatives or operating models for international cooperation between higher education institutions. In addition to this, the programme aims at strengthening the attractiveness of Finnish higher education institutions as partners and education providers.

It is hoped that the projects funded under the programme will lead to permanent and long-term cooperation between countries. The funding can also be used to renew or deepen existing cooperation between higher education institutions to cover new disciplines or forms of operation. It is hoped that the TFK programme will have permanent, long-term positive impacts on cooperation between the participating higher education institutions. Partnering institutions in the target regions also contribute to the planning and realisation of the projects and cover some of their costs.

The programme is not intended for preliminary activities carried out for the purpose of establishing cooperation, such as getting to know potential partners, carrying out visits in preparation of projects or general delegations.

### 2.1. BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLICATION ROUND

A single project can apply for funding for cooperation with one or more higher education institutions in the partnering countries. Applications must be prepared in cooperation between Finnish and partnering higher education institutions.

The duration of the funded projects is 1 August 2024 – 31 December 2026. The maximum amount of funding that can be awarded to an individual project is €80,000.

Higher education institutions can submit any number of applications during the TFK programme's application round. However, a maximum of two projects from the same higher education institution can be funded for cooperation with one target country or region.

---

<sup>1</sup> The TFK programme of the Finnish National Agency for Education funds higher education cooperation with the following countries:

**Southern Africa:** SADC countries i.e. Angola, Botswana, Southern Africa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, Seychelles, Eswatini, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Madagascar as well as Ruanda and Burundi, countries of a non-resident envoy of Finland situated in the area.

**Latin America:** Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guayana, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela.



## 2.2. COOPERATION PROJECTS

Participating projects must involve educational cooperation at one or several different degree levels (bachelor's, master's and/or doctoral). The programme is open to all disciplines.

Participating projects can involve one or several of the following forms of educational cooperation between partnering higher education institutions:

- Joint study units, courses and intensive courses
- The development and realisation of digital/virtual teaching
- Curriculum cooperation
- Joint/double degrees
- Mobility (teacher, staff, student and/or trainee mobility)
- Working life cooperation.

Granted project funding can be used to cover two categories of costs:

- 1) Travel costs, which must account for at least 50% of the project funding.
- 2) Organisational and other costs, which can account for up to 50% of the project funding.

**Travel costs** can result from the travel/mobility periods of students, graduate students and/or teaching or other staff of the participating higher education institutions between Finland and the target country. The project's travel costs can be divided among several target groups (students and staff) depending on the objectives of the project.

- **Staff travel costs:** Additional costs resulting from travel, such as travel tickets, accommodation, travel agency costs, visas, insurance and potential per diem allowances, are also considered valid travel costs. Covid tests of staff travelling in the framework of the programme are also valid travel costs. The travel/mobility must be justified and cost-efficient and take into account the principles of sustainable development.
- **Student travel costs:** Students receive a daily or monthly mobility grant based on the length of the mobility period as well as a travel grant, regardless of the actual costs of the mobility period. Take a closer look at chapters 2.3.1 and 2.3.2.

**Organisational costs** must consist of expenses directly associated with the realisation of the core activities of the projects, such as the online realisation of course and teaching content, teaching-related course material or the organisation of events. Valid organisational costs include the purchase of services and the renting of equipment, for example. Organisational and other costs can also include wages and salaries, but they can only account for up to 20% of the total project funding granted. Salaries must not be subjected to management overheads such as administrative overhead costs, financial administration costs, office expenses, occupational health care costs, performance bonuses or fringe benefits. Salary costs must be based on the effective working time associated with the implementation of the project.

**The funding cannot be used** to cover the administrative costs of higher education institutions, hospitality costs or business gifts.

If the costs have been estimated as including VAT in the budget plan of the project, they must also be reported as including VAT.

The project funding can be divided between the higher education institutions participating in the project as the project sees fit. If project funding is transferred to the project partners, the partner higher education



institutions must open a separate monitoring item/project in their accounting and provide an accounting report during reporting, which indicates the use of project funding.

### **2.3. INSTRUCTIONS FOR MOBILITY PERIODS**

Partnering higher education institutions and their cooperation partners can carry out student exchange, traineeship periods as well as teacher and other staff mobility under the projects carried out under the TFK programme. The aim of mobility is to create permanent cooperation between higher education institutions in Finland and partnering countries through reciprocal student and staff exchange. Student and staff mobility periods can be either short or long in length. Physical mobility periods should preferably be combined with virtual cooperation or study content.

#### **2.3.1. LONG-TERM STUDENT MOBILITY**

Long-term student mobility can consist of 2–12 months of uninterrupted study. A mobility grant can only be awarded to a registered degree student of a higher education institution participating in the project. Students are paid both a monthly grant based on the length of the mobility period as well as a travel grant regardless of the actual costs.

The grant amounts for long-term student mobility in the TFK programme are:

Incoming student mobility €900/month

Outgoing student mobility €700/month

In addition, a student will receive a travel grant of €1,200/exchange. Those students who are required to travel a longer journey for example in order to obtain a visa, can receive a supplemented travel grant of €1,700/exchange.

The applicant should estimate on the application the number of mobile students (incoming and outgoing) as well as the total of the mobility months within the project, as well as an estimate of the total grants. Applicants are required to calculate their estimate of the total grants based on the grant amounts specified in this call for applications.

In the final report stage the final grant will be calculated according to the realized long-term student mobilities in months, not the actual costs of the mobilities.

#### **2.3.2. SHORT-TERM STUDENT MOBILITY**

Short-term student mobility can consist of 5–30 days of uninterrupted study/training. The mobility grant can only be awarded for full-time studying or training taking place in the target country. A mobility grant can only be awarded to a registered degree student of a higher education institution participating in the project. Students are paid both a daily grant based on the length of the mobility period as well as a travel grant regardless of the actual costs.

The content of the short-term mobility period must support the students' studies and studies from the mobility period should be included in full to the degree of the student. The funding cannot be awarded for language and culture courses alone. Short-term mobility periods should preferably always include virtual study content as well.

The grant amounts for short-term student mobility in the TFK programme are:

Incoming student mobility; days 1–14 €70/day and days 15–30 €50/day.



Outgoing student mobility; days 1-14 €70/day and days 15-30 €50/day.

The daily grant for short-term student mobility can be paid up to a maximum of 30 days.

In addition, a student will receive a travel grant of €1,200/mobility. Those students who are required to travel a longer journey for example to obtain a visa, can receive a supplemented travel grant of €1,700/mobility.

The applicant should estimate on the application the number of mobile students (incoming and outgoing) as well as the total of the mobility days within the project, as well as an estimate of the total grants. Applicants are required to calculate their estimate of the total grants based on the grant amounts specified in this call for applications.

In the final report stage the final grant will be calculated according to the realized short-term student mobilities in days, not the actual costs of the mobilities.

### **2.3.3. STAFF MOBILITY**

Staff mobility costs may be covered for persons who are staff members of a higher education institution participating in the project during the mobility period. Staff mobility periods should preferably always be combined with virtual cooperation or teaching content.

In staff mobility, support from the TFK programme to cover travel costs can be paid according to actual costs. The applicant should estimate on the application the number of mobile staff members and days within the project, as well as an estimate of the total costs. The travel/mobility must be justified and cost-efficient.

In the final report stage the final grant will be calculated according to the actual realized costs of the reported staff mobilities.

## **3. PROJECT COMPOSITION AND FUNDING AMOUNT**

The funding must be applied for by a Finnish higher education institution, which submits the funding application to the Finnish National Agency for Education on behalf of the entire partner network. The Finnish higher education institution is also responsible for the use of the funding and reports on it to the Finnish National Agency for Education during and after the agreement period.

The project must involve at least one higher education institution from Finland and one higher education institution from an eligible target country. Finnish higher education institutions are encouraged to engage in national cooperation in their cooperation initiatives related to the TFK programme. The maximum amount of project funding can only be awarded to projects involving multiple Finnish higher education institutions. The aim is to engage in cooperation with higher education institutions in eligible target countries that are strategically important to their Finnish partners. The cooperation should, on principle, be reciprocal in nature and benefit all the parties involved.

The maximum amount of funding that can be awarded to a single project is €80,000. The amount of funding awarded can also be lower than the amount specified in the application.



### **3.1. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

The project costs must be visible in the accounting of the Finnish higher education institution coordinating the project as a separate project. The expenses covered by the partner higher education institutions must also be verifiable with accounting statements.

Partnering institutions in the target regions also contributing to the planning and realisation of the projects and covering some of the project costs is considered an advantage in project selection. Covering some of the costs can mean that the partners pay some of the travel costs of their higher education institutions' staff or students or cover some of the costs of events organised in the target country, for example.

In addition to higher education institutions, projects can also involve other operators or organisations, such as companies or associations. However, they are responsible for their own potential travel related costs.

The project application and the attached commitment letters (the so-called TFK statements) must include a breakdown of the funding allocated to the project by the partnering higher education institutions, and the final report of the project must detail how the funding was realised.

### **3.2. COOPERATION PARTNERS' COMMITMENT LETTERS**

The partner higher education institutions must each supply a commitment letter (TFK statement) signed by a legal representative of the higher education institution, a scanned copy of which is attached to the application form on the Finnish National Agency for Education's government subsidy system. If the commitment letter is signed by a person other than the legal representative of the higher education institution notified to the Finnish National Agency for Education, a delegation decision (or equivalent) should be attached to the application in addition to the commitment letter.

The TFK statements supplied by partnering higher education institutions must be consistent and meaningful and demonstrate that the partner is committed to the project. The TFK statement does not need to follow a specific format, but it must include the following information corresponding to the application:

- The name of the project
- The name of the partnering higher education institution
- The contact information of the partnering higher education institution's contact person
- A description of project participation; what kind of role the higher education institution and its staff/students will have in the realisation of the project
- A description of the higher education institution's commitment to the project
- A description of the importance of the cooperation to the partnering higher education institution
- Any funding that the partner has allocated to the project.

## **4. ELIGIBILITY AND EVALUATION CRITERIA**

### **4.1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

The project must meet the following requirements to be eligible to apply:

- The project is coordinated by a Finnish higher education institution that submits the application to the Finnish National Agency for Education on behalf of all the project partners.
- The project involves at least one higher education institution from Finland and one higher education institution from an eligible target country.



- The application is submitted in its entirety by the deadline via the Finnish National Agency for Education's government subsidy system.
- The partnering higher education institutions named in the application have supplied TFK statements, which are attached to the application on the online state grant system.

If the requirements detailed above are not met, the application is considered ineligible and will not proceed to evaluation.

#### **4.2. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The primary selection criterion is the quality of the application. The balance between the target regions is also taken into consideration regarding the total amount of funding to be granted overall. The Finnish National Agency for Education can also limit the number of funded projects from one higher education institution in the total amount of granted funding. All applications that meet the eligibility criteria will undergo a quality evaluation, in which their relative strength is evaluated based on the extent to which they are considered capable of meeting the following selection criteria:

##### **Needs analysis and roles of partners**

- The project responds to an educational need that has broader significance in regard to cooperation between the countries, and the project provides clear additional value in relation to prior initiatives.
- The planned activities are relevant to the participating higher education institutions.
- The project composition is well justified and the responsibilities, roles and tasks of the involved higher education institutions are clearly described.
- The participating higher education institutions have an institutional commitment to and interest in the activities, they participate e.g. in the costs by allocating their own funding in the project.

##### **Quality of cooperation, activity design and implementation**

- The activities are realistically planned, clearly described and appropriately spread over the project period. The project describes clearly how the planned activities will be covered by the applied funding.
- Quality aspects are taken into account in the activities and the progress/successes, etc. of the project are monitored.
- The operating plan acknowledges the risk factors associated with the realisation of the project and includes contingency plans for them.
- The project does not remain a one-off, but is integrated into the normal operation of the higher education institutions.
- The following are also taken into account in projects involving student mobility:
  - The project's partnerships and the number of mobilities applied for are proportional to the number of participating higher education institutions and the realisation plans of the mobilities are realistic.
  - The support services for marketing, preparation, implementation and follow-up of the applied mobility activities are in place.
  - There are processes in place for recognising the participating students' learning outcomes (such as ECTS and other mechanisms).

##### **Results and impact**

- The expected results are concretely and realistically described and will remain a part of the higher education institutions' operations after the project period.
- The impact of the planned activities is described from the perspective of the participants and organisations in Finland and the target countries.



- The activities/results of the project support the internationalisation of the students and staff of the participating higher education institutions beyond the persons/parties participating in the projects.
- The project has operating methods in place for communicating about the activities and results of the project period.

## 5. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

**The deadline for applications is 2 May 2024** (the online system will close at 16:15). Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered. All applicants will be notified of the results of the application round within two months of the end of the application period.

The application form must be submitted by the deadline using the online system. Paper versions of applications do not need to be sent by post. The information requested on the application form can be viewed on the programme's website.

## 6. AGREEMENT PERIOD AND REPORTING

The duration of the funded projects is 1 August 2024 – 31 December 2026. The Finnish National Agency for Education must be provided with an interim report during the project period and a final report after the end of the project period.

The reports shall consist of a written report, a mobility report and a financial report. The higher education institution must also provide the Finnish National Agency for Education with accounting statements that list the costs associated with the project (including the higher educational institution's own funding).

## 7. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information about the programme and application instructions are available on the Finnish National Agency for Education's website at <https://www.oph.fi/en/programmes/tfk-programme>.

The general e-mail address for inquiries related to the programme is [TFK-programme@oph.fi](mailto:TFK-programme@oph.fi).

Contact persons at the Finnish National Agency for Education:

Mari Pohjola  
tel. +358 (0)295 331 746