

FINLAND

This information on national public-health research structures has been gained from country key informants and internet searches for STEPS (Strengthening Engagement in Public Health Research www.steps-ph.eu), a project funded by the European Commission Seventh Framework Research Programme. It builds on the country profiles and reports from Ministries of Health and Ministries of Science that were created previously for SPHERE (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/public-health/sphere/sphereprofiles.htm>).

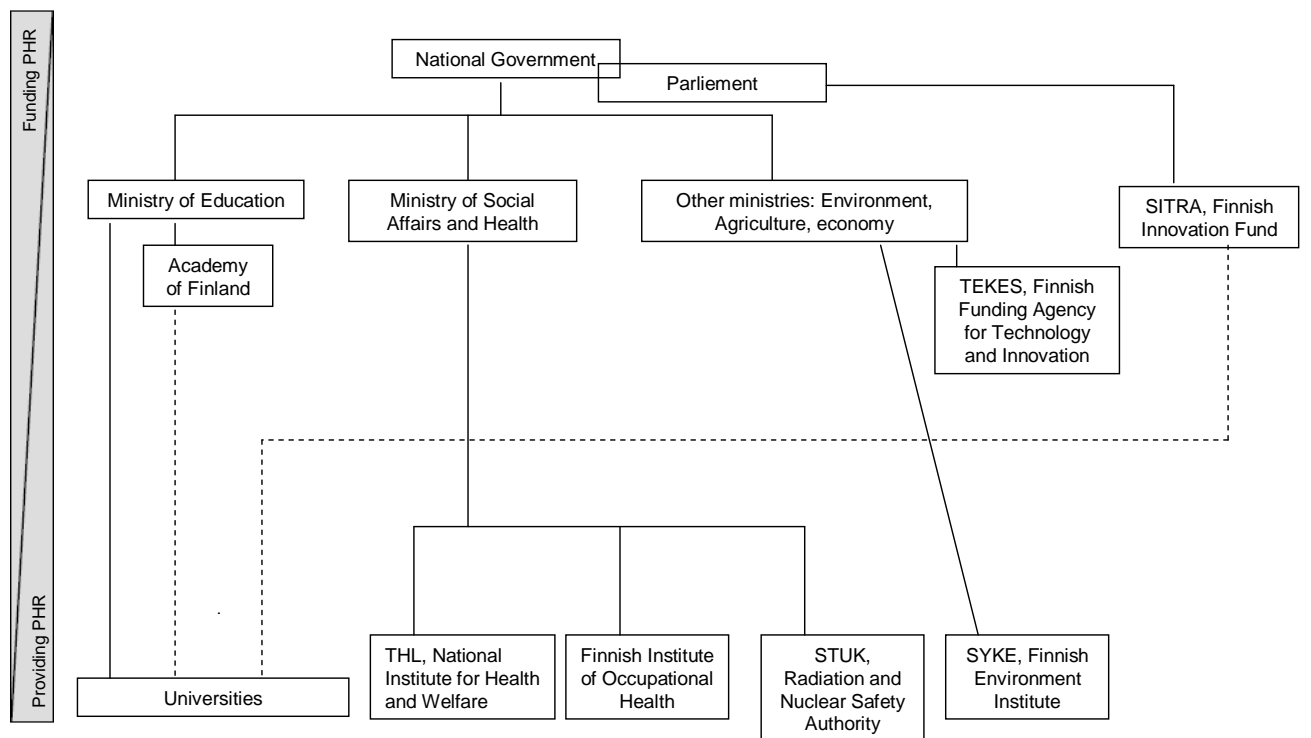


The organogram shows the structure for managing and providing public-health research from the perspective of financial flows.

The main organisations are also briefly described, with their URLs, and other relevant national documents and information on public-health research.

Note: 'Public-health research' includes all health research at population, organisation and system level broadly relevant to health and health-care policy and practice. It excludes clinical and laboratory (biomedical) research.

1. Organogram



PHR: Public Health research;
 —————> funding negotiated between government and agency/organization; includes direct commissioning
 - - - - -> funding competitive process where rules are more or less explicit and known in advance

2. Research Commissioners

2.1 Ministry of Health

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, <http://www.stm.fi/etusivu>

2.2. Ministry of Science

Ministry of Education and Culture, <http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/?lang=en>

2.2.1. Academy of Finland

<http://www.aka.fi/en-gb/A/Academy-of-Finland/The-Academy/>

The Academy of Finland is the prime funding agency for basic research in Finland. The Academy operates within the administrative sector of the Ministry of Education (<http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Tiede/?lang=en>). The Academy of Finland is an important source of research funding. The Academy finances a wide range of basic research, which underpins innovative applied research and the utilisation of research findings. Most of the Academy funding is channelled to university research. The Academy, jointly with Tekes, administers EU research programmes and international research organisations in Finland. There are four Research Councils at the Academy of Finland: Research Council for Biosciences and Environment; Research Council for Culture and Society; Research Council for Natural Sciences and Engineering; Research Council for Health.

The Research fields within the Research Council for Health include Public health science; Occupational and environmental medicine; Biomedicine; Veterinary medicine; Pharmacy; Dental science; Nursing science; Clinical medicine; Sport sciences; Nutrition science. Finally it includes Biochemistry, genetics, microbiology, biotechnology, molecular biology, cell biology, biophysics and bioinformatics relating to the above fields of research.

Academy funding is based on open competition and independent peer review. The Academy annually makes funding decisions worth around 300 million euros. Each year, some 5,000 people work in Academy-funded research projects.

The Academy offers a wide variety of funding opportunities. Each form of funding is normally open for application either in January or in October. The forms of funding open for application are described in detail in the calls for applications that are published before the call respectively.

Through its research programmes, the Academy of Finland directs research and allocates research funding to fields that are considered of key importance in terms of science and society. A major emphasis in Academy research programmes is on multidisciplinary and transdisciplinarity as well as international cooperation.

The Academy Board decides on the start-up of new research programmes. Programmes are focused on a defined subject area, scheduled to run for a set period and composed of several research projects. Funding is provided for at least four years. Programmes have a coordinated management. Researchers may submit programme initiatives for consideration. Such initiatives may arise from the development need of a certain research field or from the need to generate knowledge on an issue important to society.

2.3. Other ministries or parliament

2.3.1. The Ministry of the Environment,

<http://www.environment.fi/default.asp?contentid=366220&lan=EN> funds SYKE (3.1.5.)

2.3.2. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, <http://www.mmm.fi/en/index/frontpage.html> funds SYKE (3.1.5.)

2.3.3. The Ministry of Employment and the Economy, <http://www.tem.fi/?l=en>, funds Tekes

2.3.3.1. Tekes – Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation

(<http://www.tekes.fi/en/community/Home/351/Home/473>) is the main public funding organisation for research, development and innovation in Finland.

Tekes addresses themes that are crucial for Finland's future through long-term programmes based on cooperation with an extensive team of actors and by participating in launching, developing and funding Strategic Centres for Science, Technology and Innovation.

The package also includes campaigns encouraging R&D and innovation activities as well as selected forms of international cooperation. Tekes prepares and plans the programmes in collaboration with customers and partners. When a programme area has been defined, the projects to be funded are chosen through competition.

Every year, Tekes grants around EUR 600 million towards innovative projects. Funding is also available for developing work organisations. Tekes directs 50–60 per cent of the funding to the strategy's focus areas and 40–50 per cent according to demand to the best and the most significant projects in terms of impact within any sector.

Tekes is funded and steered by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy.

(Source: <http://www.tekes.fi/en/community/Home/351/Home/473> assessed in April 2010 and Hyytinen K, Loikkanen T, Konttinen J, Nieminen M. The role of public research organizations in the change of the national innovation system in Finland. The Advisory Board for Sectoral Research, 2009)

2.3.4. Sitra - The Finnish Innovation Fund (<http://www.sitra.fi/en/>) is an independent public fund which under the supervision of the Finnish Parliament promotes the welfare of Finnish society. Since its establishment, Sitra's duty has been to promote stable and balanced development in Finland, the qualitative and quantitative growth of its economy and its international competitiveness and co-operation.

Sitra currently focuses actively on five programmes: Municipal Programme; Energy Programme; Growth Programme for the Mechanical Industry; Landmarks Programme; Public Leadership and Management. There are six programmes that have been completed: Food and Nutrition, Environment, Health care, Russia, India and Innovation. Through the programmes, Sitra aims at a quick response to issues critical to the competitiveness and economic growth of Finland. The programmes will be carried out in close collaboration with the national and international actors in each of the focus areas.

2.4. Regions

2.5. Foundations

3. Research Performers

3.1. State Institutes

3.1.1. THL, National Institute for Health and Welfare (http://www.thl.fi/en_US/web/en)

The National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) is a research and development institute under the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (<http://www.stm.fi/en/ministry>). The THL was formed on January 2009 through the merger of the National Public Health Institute (KTL) and the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES). Most of the information is still located on the STAKES and KTL websites.

(http://www.ktl.fi/portal/english/research_people_programs;
<http://www.stakes.fi/EN/Tutkimus/index.htm>)

THL is the statutory statistical authority in health and welfare and maintains a strong knowledge base within its own field of operations. THL serves as an expert in research and development in population health and welfare. The research carried out at THL is closely linked to the promotion of wellbeing and health and the prevention of diseases and disabilities.

THL is also actively engaged in the development of: 1. new models for organizing social and health services; 2. good practices for promoting wellbeing and health; 3. expertise and tools for implementing good practices.

3.1.2. Finohta, the Finnish Office for Health Technology Assessment (<http://finohta.stakes.fi/EN/index.htm>), promotes the use of good, evidence-based technologies in health care and thereby develops the efficiency and effectiveness of health care.

Finohta is an independent, public assessment agency working as a part of National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL). Finohta produces, supports and co-ordinates Health Care Technology Assessment (HCTA or HTA) in Finland. Furthermore, it disseminates assessment results and experiences, both national and international, within the health care system.

3.1.3. FIOH, the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (<http://www.ttl.fi/internet/english>) is a research and specialist organization in the sector of occupational health and safety.

Scientific research is the core of FIOH's activities. Research and development work generates new knowledge that can be applied to improve working conditions, to promote workers' health and work ability, to ensure the smooth functioning of working communities, and to enhance well-being.

Most of the research done by FIOH is applied research. The results can be rather quickly put into practice in Finnish working life. Some of the research aims at more long-range results, seeking, disease mechanisms and determining the theoretical basis for phenomena for instance. The FIOH research is carried out in departments organised by scientific disciplines: Epidemiology and biostatistics; Ergonomics; Physical occupational hygiene; Physiology; Psychology; Toxicology; Occupational medicine; Occupational health services; Occupational safety.

(Source: <http://www.ttl.fi/internet/english/research>, assessed in April 2010)

3.1.4. STUK, the Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (http://www.stuk.fi/en_GB/) is primarily a supervisory authority, under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and its tasks include limiting and preventing the harmful impact of radiation, monitoring the safety of radiation sources and nuclear energy related, and research, training and communication. The research conducted by STUK yields new information related to the use, occurrence and effects of radiation.

(Source: http://www.stuk.fi/en_GB/, assessed in September 2010 and Hyytinen K, Loikkanen T, Konttinen J, Nieminen M. The role of public research organizations in the change of the national innovation system in Finland. The Advisory Board for Sectoral Research, 2009)

3.1.5. SYKE, the Finnish Environment Institute (<http://www.environment.fi/default.asp?contentid=355210&lan=EN>) is both a research institute, and a centre for environmental expertise.

SYKE's research programmes assess environmental problems from a multi-disciplinary perspective, by integrating socio-economic considerations into scientific research.

Research may focus on global environmental issues such as climate change and declining biodiversity, or on regional or local issues.

The total operating funds of the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) in 2008 amounted to 45,8 million Euros. About 58 % of this sum was allocated to the Institute directly from the national government budget. About 11 % of SYKE's total funding consists of income from the sale of the Institute's services. The remaining funding is obtained from other national and international sources, including other government bodies. More than half of this additional funding consists of research and development project financing allocated by the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

3.2. Mixed organizations

3.3. Universities

The Finnish system of higher education and research is based on a so-called dual system: universities and polytechnics. These are state owned institutions and get their basic funding from the state budget. Universities are responsible for free scientific research and education based on that research. Polytechnics are more business-oriented as they are expected to serve the labour market and regional development in their locations and take into account the local economic structure through applied and consultative research activities. In 2008, there were around 176,000 degree students in 20 universities and 134,000 students in 28 polytechnics.

3.4. Health Services

3.5. Independent organizations

4. Research Strategies

4.1. The Research and Innovation Council of Finland Research and Innovation Policy Guidelines for 2011–2015

This strategy presents development policies that include 1) structural development; 2) human capital; 3) development of funding. The document states (page 38) that the “Public research institutes”, which include some of the State Institutes mentioned in 3.1 “must be developed so that multidisciplinary, high-level and relevant research with respect to society is strengthened”.

(Source: http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Tiede/tutkimus- ja_innovaationeuvosto/?lang=en;

http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Tiede/tutkimus- ja_innovaationeuvosto/julkaisut/Review2011-2015.pdf

4.2. Health 2015: public health programme

This document outlines the targets for Finland's national health policy until 2015.

The following resolutions on research are included:

“The Government gives emphasis to the following lines of action:

22. The Academy of Finland, the ministries and other parties will carry out a research programme on health promotion jointly with universities and State research institutes. The availability of research findings supporting health promotion must be improved.

23. The standing of health policy research at universities and research centres, and in WHO and EU research programmes, must be strengthened.

24. The health promotion viewpoint must also be taken into more account in the training of all health care professionals, from basic training upwards. A national public health training and research network must be set up between the universities and institutes within the

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health's purview. Familiarity with health impacts in working life will be improved in health care training by developing the network education model.

25. State research funding must be allocated to work on health disparities between social groups and the reasons for them, and especially into the identification of groups at risk of poor health or premature death, and the development of means to alleviate these problems.

(Source: <http://pre20031103.stm.fi/english/eho/publicat/health2015/health2015.pdf>, assessed in April 2010)

5. Programmes and calls

5.1. THL, National Institute for Health and Welfare (http://www.thl.fi/en_US/web/en)

THL results from the merger of the National Public Health Institute (KTL) and the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES) in 2009.

The topics of research of KTL included: Environmental Health; Infectious Diseases; Public Health and Chronic diseases; Mental Health and Alcohol research; Molecular Medicine; Vaccines.

STAKES' Research programme: STAKES has a wide range of expertise in research on social and health care issues. Partly this expertise has evolved to meet the need for information in the field; partly it is the result of conscious decisions on research priorities and the contributions of individual researchers and researcher groups.

Drawing on the new overall strategy, research activities at STAKES have been grouped into four areas of research for 2006 to 2009 as follows: Sustainability of welfare policy; Social and health services and service outcomes; Impacts of demographic changes; Welfare and inequalities.

(Source: http://www.ktl.fi/portal/english/research_people_programs; <http://www.stakes.fi/EN/Tutkimus/index.htm>, assessed in April 2010)

5.2. Academy of Finland Research programmes

The ongoing programmes include: Computational Science Research Programme LASTU (2010-2015); Research Programme on the health and welfare of children (2010-2013); Photonics and modern imaging techniques (2010-2013); Nanoscience, FinNano (2006-2010); Sustainable Production and Products, KETJU (2006-2010); Nutrition, Food and Health, ELVIRA (2006-2010); Power in Finland, VALTA (2007-2010); Substance Abuse and Addictions, ADDIKTIO (2007-2010); The Future of Work and Well-being, WORK (2008-2011); Sustainable Energy, SusEn (2008-2011); Ubiquitous computing and diversity of communication, MOTIVE (2009-2012); Responding to Public Health Challenges, SALVE (2009-2012). The Academy of Finland will also participate in the joint European Baltic Sea research programme (2010–2016).

(Source: <http://www.aka.fi/en-gb/A/For-researcher/Funding/AZ-index/Funding-of-research-programmes/>, assessed in April 2010)

6. European contacts

6.1. National FP7 Contact point (Health area)¹

6.1.1. Maiju Gyran (Academy of Finland, Health Research Unit)

6.1.2. Merja Kärkkäinen (Academy of Finland, Health Research Unit)

6.1.3. Saara Leppinen (Academy of Finland)

6.1.4. Katriina Kippo (Tekes, Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation)

6.2. National DGSANCO Contact point²

6.2.1. Eeva Ollila, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Health Department

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¹ Source: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ncp_en.html, assessed in February 2010

² Source: http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/policy/index_en.htm assessed in February 2010