



"Art of Getting Funding"

I.e. "10min talk of how EU Horizon works"



How to even get started



For PhD researcher

- Different Finnish science foundations
- Travel grants, small extra money (if salary is provided by your supervisor)

After graduation, real hunt starts

- Your own salary + funds for your team
- Foundations: small grants for postdocs
- Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship
- PoDoCo Funding
- Consortium applications with industry partners (help your supervisor to write)
 - Horizon Europe pillars + other working programmes
 - Business Finland





2+ years after graduation

- Research Council of Finland: Academy Fellow around half a million for 5 years
- European Research Council: Starting grant 1-5M€ for 5 years
- Focus on establishing your own research group and hiring people

Reality check

- Acceptance of funding applications can be as low as 12%
- But you don't get if you don't apply...
- Industry career may be more attractive at this point (and it's fine)
- As a professor, expect to spend most of your "research" time in applying new funding



So how it works (Horizon and BF version)

- You identify a call that fits your research (not the other way around)
- You identify a strong consortium you can join as a partner (you only coordinate when you know your stuff and has established networks)
- You seek support from your university finance services (budgeting, legal matters)
- You seeks approval from your unit lead that you can join and there's self funds covered
- You participate actively in consortium meetings and project plan preparation
- You hope for the best and that you didn't waste time as proposals are rarely reusable for another call (but learned a lot)

So how it works (ERC and RFC version)

- You identify a ground-breaking and novel **basic research** idea
- You contact your university research support for guidance and attend all the info sessions
- You wait it's 2 years after your PhD degree and conduct preliminary experiments to show feasibility of your idea
- You prepare the application exactly as guided and seek support and comments for it
- You wait for the best but prepare to submit again after again next year you're eligible



The Good

- Know the instrument: some funders prioritize research outputs, others societal impact
- Identifying a good and balanced consortia who are good (and nice) people to work with (both in proposal preparation and in doing the work)
- Persistence is key – don't give up after first failure, you'll train to get better
- For early career researchers, start with foundations (even if you have a salaried position)
- Offer to help supervisor with proposal so you can learn how the process goes

The Bad

- Bureaucracy and funder jargon especially with EC
- Even good proposals get rejected because there is not enough money to fund all proposals – may feel like a lottery
- Plan in advance to get institutional approval and signatures in time
- Getting rejections especially after a huge effort



The Ugly

- Sometimes it feels that getting funded itself is more important than actually accomplishing the project goals, which can be a bit disheartening
- You do a lot of work in advance before/if the project is funded
- Not fitting the 'profile' of what the funder expects you to be or do
- You need to know people: build relationship with people from funding organisation and key contact points (Horizon) to get information early enough





Random career notes

- If you wish to stay in academia (research-oriented track), you need funding under your own name
- Euros > h-index
- Learn to adapt: you need to find your fit in call topics even if they're not exactly what you've done before or want to do just now
- No funding, no career: you can only stay under someone else's wing limited amount of time



Feeling depressed?

- Consortium work can be lot of fun (interesting companies, other universities)
- Networking and talking about research and your (team's) knowledge becomes your second nature
- Opportunity to really learn about latest technologies and research around Europe

Want to learn more?

- Identify your university research support people and get to know them
- Foundation grants are mostly listed here: <https://research.fi/en/>
- Attend Horizon events to learn more about EC research fundings (often online; travel support is usually only for already established PIs)
- Take some time and read materials here: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en
- Attend your city's Business CityName events to network and learn about companies in your area (mostly free)