To Whomever This Might Concern,

Feel free to spread this information to anyone who works in Finland and might be interested. For further information, please contact science adviser Heikki Vilen (heikki.vilen@aka.fi, +358 29 5335 135).

We would like to inform you that the Academy of Finland will participate in the JTC2019 call of the new European Joint Programming on Rare Diseases (EJP RD). The topic of the call will be "Research projects to accelerate diagnosis and/or explore disease progression and mechanisms of rare diseases" and funding can be sought for a maximum of three years. Similar to Era-Net calls, only transnational projects will be funded. Each consortium submitting a proposal must involve a minimum of four eligible and a maximum of six eligible partners from at least three different countries participating to the call (see the preliminary list participating funding organizations below).

The Academy of Finland intends to budget 600 000 euros for the call, hoping to finance 2-3 Finnish project partners (max. 300 000 euros per project, full cost model).

More detailed, full official announcement of the call can be found here:
http://www.ejprarediseases.org/index.php/funding/

The two-stage call is set to open on December 15, 2018, and the deadline for submitting the pre-proposals is February 15, 2019. An independent international Scientific Evaluation Committee will carry out a scientific evaluation according to specific evaluation criteria. Based on this central evaluation, selected consortia will be invited to submit a full proposal by early May, 2019. Funding decisions will be made in the autumn of 2019 and the projects are set to start in the beginning of 2020.

The aim of the call is to enable scientists in different countries to build an effective collaboration on a common interdisciplinary research project based on complementarities and sharing of expertise, with a clear translational research approach.

Transnational research proposals must cover at least one of the following areas, which are equal in relevance for this call:

Research to accelerate diagnosis, e.g:

- New schemes for finding diagnosis for undiagnosed patients;
- Improved annotation and interpretation of variants and development of diagnostic tests for the more prevalent variants;
- Novel modalities of functional analysis of candidate variants through in vitro, cell, tissue or animal studies;
- Omic or multi-omic integrated approaches for discovery of disease causes and mechanisms including development of relevant bioinformatic tools.

Research to explore disease progression and mechanisms, e.g:

- Natural history studies and patient registries (also for clinical trial readiness). Whenever possible these should include development and use of patient reported outcome measures. In addition, the exploration of the use of standardized M-Health-based surveillance instruments and of patient entered data to gather information for natural history studies is welcome;
- Identification of clinical biomarkers, clinical outcome measures and surrogate endpoints;
- Identification of novel pathophysiological pathways in appropriate disease models that effectively mimic the human condition.

The following approaches and topics are excluded from the scope of this call:

- Approaches concerning rare infectious diseases or rare cancers;
- Approaches concerning rare adverse drug events/medical complications in treatments of common diseases;
- Studies that focus on pre-clinical therapy development and/or validation in cellular or animal models. These will be addressed in future calls;
- Interventional clinical trials;
- Rare neurodegenerative diseases which are within the main focus of the Joint Programming Initiative on Neurodegenerative Disease Research (JPND; http://www.neurodegenerationresearch.eu/). These concern: Alzheimer's disease and other dementias; Parkinson's disease (PD) and PD-related disorders; Prion disease; Motor Neuron Diseases; Huntington's disease; Spinal Muscular Atrophy and dominant forms of Spinocerebellar Ataxia. Interested researchers should refer to the relevant JPND calls. Not excluded through this specification are childhood dementias/neurodegenerative diseases.

Indicative list of participating funding agencies:

- Austrian Science Fund (FWF), Austria
- Research Foundation Flanders (FWO), Belgium, Flanders
- Fund for Scientific Research - FNRS (F.R.S.-FNRS), Belgium, Wallonia
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research – Institute of Genetics (CIHR-IG), Canada
- Fonds de recherche du Québec-Santé (FRQS), Québec (Canada)
- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS), Czech Republic
- Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia (MoSAE), Estonia
- Academy of Finland (AKA), Finland
- French National Research Agency (ANR), France
- French Foundation for Rare Diseases (FFRD), France
- Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), Germany
- German Research Foundation (DFG), Germany
- General Secretariat for Research and Technology (GSRT), Greece
- National Research, Development and Innovation Office (NKFIH), Hungary
- Health Research Board, (HRB), Ireland
- Chief Scientist Office of the Ministry of Health (CSO-MOH), Israel
- Italian Ministry of Health (MoH-IT), Italy
- Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR), Italy
- Regional Foundation for Biomedical Research (FRRB), Lombardy (Italy)
- Tuscany Region (RT/TuscReg), Tuscany (Italy)
- Research Council of Lithuania (RCL), Lithuania
- National Research Fund (FNR), Luxembourg
- National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR), Poland
- The Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), Portugal
- Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS), Slovakia
- National Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII), Spain
- Swedish Research Council (SRC), Sweden
- Vinnova, Sweden
- Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), Switzerland
- Netherlands Organization for Health Research and Development (ZonMw), The Netherlands
- The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK), Turkey

- The French National Institute of Health and Medical Research (INSERM), France (will provide dedicated funding only to Patient Advocacy Organisations)

Best Regards,

Heikki Vilen

Heikki Vilen, PhD
Science Adviser
Biosciences, Health and Environmental Research
Academy of Finland
P.O. Box 131
FI-00531 Helsinki, FINLAND
Phone +358-29-533 5135
Fax +358 29 533 5299
E-mail: heikki.vilen@aka.fi, Internet: www.aka.fi/en