Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö
Jord- och skogsbruksministeriet
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

18 November 2019

Guidelines for reporting on research and development activities

Contents

1. General introduction

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (the Ministry) monitors the use of funding and assesses the applicability and impact of the results of research and development activities for which it provides funding. The Ministry requires publications and research materials produced by funded projects to be made openly available according to the principles of open access (https://avointiede.fi/en/policies-and-key-actors/instructions-and-policies).

The recipient of the funding must ensure that communications about the project are sufficiently broad and visible, e.g. in Finnish professional journals and in **Projectnet**, the online database of descriptions of research projects focusing on natural resources and the environment (http://www.projectnet.fi/). If necessary, the results of the project can also be communicated in a press release. The responsible project administrator is in charge of communications concerning the project. **The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry requires** funding recipients to **mention the funding party and the source of the funding** (e.g. Agrifood Research and Development Fund, Makera, or #makera on social media) in **all communications concerning the project**. Communications must also take into account Swedish-speaking readers.

The Ministry publishes a list of the projects it funds on its website. If necessary, the listing can be accompanied by a brief description of the project (according to the summary provided in the application). The summary provided in the project application must briefly indicate the objective of the project, the timetable, the key actions and the expected outputs and results of the project.

Project reporting should be done in line with these guidelines, unless otherwise agreed on with the Ministry.

2. General guidelines for reporting

Recipients of funding for **multi-year projects** (= annually funded projects) shall prepare a written interim report once a year. This report shall be submitted to the Ministry in connection with the application for continued funding. As a general rule, an interim report is not required **for projects lasting less than one year or for projects for which all of the project funding has been granted with a single decision** (= lump sum projects). Instead, the parties implementing such projects may agree on the most appropriate form of reporting together with the steering group supervising the progress of the project or with the supervisor appointed by the Ministry.

At the end of the project, the recipient of the funding shall send the **final report** and summaries to the Ministry. As a general rule, **Makera projects** must also include recommendations for action (a “policy brief”). Projects receiving funding under other budgetary items may also draw up recommendations for action, but this is generally not required of them. If it so wishes, the Ministry may publish the final report, summary and recommendations for action on its website and otherwise reserves the right to use them in its summaries and reports.

A more detailed description of the content of the interim and final report is provided in Annex 1.

Interim project report

The interim report summarises the progress of the project and the measures taken so far, and presents a project continuation plan, which should clearly indicate any changes and deviations from the original research plan. The interim report also presents a report on the use of funds so far, as well as a plan for the use of funds for the application year(s).

Annually funded projects

Interim reports for annually funded projects shall be submitted in connection with the application for continued funding by the end of October using the online service, where separate instructions are provided. The online service can be accessed using the link on the Ministry's main research page (www.mmm.fi/tutkimus (in Finnish)) or directly at: https://www.hankerahoitus.fi/MMM/hakemus/kirjaudu.php?ki=1.

In connection with the application for continued funding for annually funded projects, the financing plan for the application shall also be updated in the system (sections 5, 6 and 7 of the form). The interim report shall be accompanied by a statement of support from the steering group or the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry official supervising the project (minutes from the meeting/email statement).

Lump sum projects

Lump sum projects shall report on their progress to the steering group (or supervisor) in a jointly agreed manner. Even if no actual interim written report is submitted, the guidelines below may be used to assist in informing the steering group/supervisor about the progress of the project.

Final project report

In connection with the final invoicing instalment, the recipient of the funding shall submit the final report on the project to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's Registry at the latest within three months of the project end date mentioned in the funding decision or the end date of the approved costs of the project.

If the final report is not completed by the deadline, the recipient of the funding shall submit a written application for additional time to complete the project to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (kirjaamo@mmm.fi) before the end of the project's funding period. The free-form application must describe the current state of the project and indicate the reason for the delay and the measures required for the completion of the project, including a schedule. The application must be accompanied by a statement of support from the steering group/the Ministry official supervising (e.g. minutes from the meeting of the steering group or an email statement). Please note: Additional time will not be granted automatically!

Inquiries

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry: https://mmm.fi/en/research-and-development

Agrifood Research and Development Fund (Makera):

General research matters: Suvi Ryynänen, tel. +358 295 16 2126 (suvi.ryynanen (at) mmm.fi)

Payments, accounting, final reports: Taina Hakala, tel. +358 295 16 2461 (taina.hakala (at) mmm.fi)

Payments: Merja Keski-Saari, tel. +358 295 204 416 (merja.keski-saari (at) ruokavirasto.fi).

Item 30.01.22 (Research and development):

General research matters: Mikko Peltonen, tel. +358 295 16 2296 (mikko.peltonen (at) mmm.fi)

General research matters: Elina Nikkola, tel. +358 295 16 2333 (elina.nikkola (at) mmm.fi)

Invoicing, accounting, final reports: Päivi Ahvonen, tel. +358 295 16 2489 (paivi.ahvonen (at) mmm.fi)

Annex 1

Interim report

Please briefly present the following

1. Current status of the project

- original objectives of the project
- possible revisions to the objectives and justifications for these
- statement on the progress of the project and the use of funds to carry out the research
- most important results achieved during the year and preliminary self-assessment (in terms of scientific and practical value/potential)
- practical progress of the project, including difficulties encountered in implementing the project, personnel changes and any changes in funding that may affect the execution of the work.

2. Continuation plan

- a detailed action plan that clearly indicates any changes and deviations from the original project plan, changes that will be/have been made to the action plan/activities of the project, and, based on these, a work plan and a plan for the use of funds for the application year
- amount of funding being applied for (in the case of annually funded projects)

3. Publications and seminars presenting the results

- as soon as the interim reports or sub-reports are completed, the recipient of the funding must ensure that the reports are distributed to the funding parties and to others who are interested in new information in the field.

Final report

The final report is more detailed than the interim report and cannot be replaced by interim project reports.

The final report may be either:

- a short summary, also known as a final technical report, which is attached to the project's scientific research report or other final publication (see Annex 2); or
- a separate, broader final report, generally 5–15 pages in length. A broader final report is necessary in the case of projects that do not produce a clear main publication and where the results are instead published in a wide range of media (such as press releases, journal articles, teaching materials and seminar publications, for instance).
- as a general rule, all Makera projects must include recommendations for action, or a “policy brief”, unless otherwise decided (see Annex 3).

The final report is necessary in order for the final instalment of the funding to be invoiced and paid.

The final report must present the following:

1. Objectives of the project

The objectives defined in the detailed project plan as approved by the steering group. The results achieved in the project should be reflected against these objectives. If it has been necessary to revise or specify the objectives during the implementation stage, the reasons for the change should be justified and the revised objectives should be clearly presented in the final report.

2. Parties and cooperation

Partners in the project (research institutes, groups of researchers, companies, advisory partners) and their role in the implementation of the project. Who was responsible for which sub-tasks, what kind of cooperation was carried out, the most important experiences (good/bad), possible proposals for improving cooperation in the future, etc.

3. Results

3.1 Methods and materials

The main methods and materials as well as implementation arrangements (literature review, field trials, laboratory tests, etc.) described concisely.

3.2 Results

The key results and their implementation, in relation to the original objectives of the project. This text should be a non-technical description, not expert text.

3.3 Assessment of the implementation phase

Review of the successes and failures in the implementation phase. Describe any particular difficulties, shortcomings in the arrangement of experiments or material, statistical representativeness of the results, and problems related to cooperation in terms of schedules or research. The aim is not to pull the rug out from under the project, but rather to help future researchers to focus on what is essential and avoid obvious errors.

3.4 Publications

Publications and manuscripts completed as part of the project. In the case of projects funded by Makera, the main publications shall be distributed to the parties mentioned in the funding decision.

4. Evaluation of results

4.1 Practical applicability of the results

The practical implications/significance of the results. Are the results useful, for example, from the perspective of new cultivation methods, processing of foodstuffs, product development or marketing? Are there any opportunities for patenting? How will the results benefit the drafting of legislation by the authorities? Will the results promote the creation of new business? Who could benefit from the results? Have the results already been utilised? If so, where and how?

4.2 Scientific significance of the results

The added value of the results compared to the previous (scientific) data resources. What is the value of the results internationally? What final projects (theses) were produced as part of the study? How should further studies or projects be targeted and prioritised?

5. Summary and recommendations for action ("policy brief")

For small-scale projects and studies, it is enough to provide a short summary that is fit for publication and has a scope of around two pages. Guidelines for this are provided in Annex 2 (Times New Roman size 10, line spacing 1). The summary should present the theme of the project, along with its parties, persons in charge, budget and technical description. The budget must specify the total cost of the project, the funding granted by the Ministry, the self-financing provided by the parties to the project, and any other external funding.

In addition, the summary shall include a description of the objectives, key results and evaluation of the results of the project, as well as the publications produced as part of the project.

As a rule, recommendations for action are required for Makera-funded research and development projects in accordance with Annex 3. Instead of "policy brief", we use the word *toimintasuosituksia* ("recommendations for action") in Finnish. The aim of the recommendations for action is to promote the utilisation of the research data to support decision-making and economic activities. The recommendations for action are stored electronically on the Ministry's research website (https://mmm.fi/tutkimus, website in Finnish). The primary target group consists of policymakers, decision-makers and business life as a whole, but also, of course, interested citizens. The total length of the recommendations for action must not exceed four (4) pages, and a separate template (template) can also be used for this purpose. In addition, some technical instructions are provided at the end of Annex 3. Each organisation's own presentation material/policy brief template can also be used as a basis.

Annex 2

Final technical report (Link)

Name of the project
Name of the project in English

Organisations responsible	Contact person

Street address	Postal code and city/town
Telephone	Email address

Duration of the project (20XX–20XX)	Final report DD Mmmmmm 20XX

Funding	EUR
• Total cost	
• Total funding received from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	
• Self-financing	
• Funding from other public sources	
• Other external funding	

Keywords

Abstract
Objectives
Results
Evaluation of results

Publications (Listed here or in a separate annex to the final report)

Annex 3

Recommendations for action

IDEA – WHY MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION?

The total length of the recommendations for action **shall not exceed four (4) pages, and a template** (template) can also be used for this purpose. Some technical guidelines are also provided at the end of this guide. **The organisation's own presentation material/policy brief template can also be used as a basis.**

1. Title

The title must be informative, **concise and interesting – not too long**. The title must fit on one row, so the font size can be slightly reduced if necessary.

2. Summary and keywords (max. 1 page)

The summary is the most important page of the recommendations for action, as it may be the only part that the busiest readers have time to read. It is very important for the summary to fit on the first page. For this reason, the summary should be drafted with particular care so that it covers all the most essential topics. At the bottom of the summary page, you can put a framed “info box” containing, for example, definitions of key concepts or other important information. It can also contain a figure, image or chart to attract the reader's interest. The summary should justify any needs for changes and summarise the proposed recommendations.

The key words of the project are listed at the end of this section: feel free to suggest your own, but the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry may change them or add their own words that they use in the classification of research projects.

3. Pull quotes

The purpose of the pull quotes on the left side of the template is to highlight the main parts of the project in a way that is clear for the reader. The reader must be able to obtain a good, clear overview of the entire content and message of the recommendations for action by glancing through the pull quotes on the left edge of the page. The pull quotes on the summary page can contain, for instance, key questions answered by the study.

4. Wording and structure

Use standard language and clear word order. Use short sentences. Do not use unnecessary conditional forms. Use clear graphics and images and do not pack the page too full (white space on the page is good). Write short paragraphs and use bullet points, pull quotes, bold text, etc.

Sections:

4.1 Introduction (you may use another word for the title)

The introduction provides a brief summary of the background of the project, describes the studied phenomenon and the research question, etc. and explains why the topic is important. After reading the introduction, the reader should understand why the topic is central for policy and/or business life.

4.2 Material and methods

The material section describes very briefly the material used in the project and how it was obtained. The data utilisation methods can also be described in this section.

4.3 Results and their impact, conclusions and challenges

The section presents the key results of the project and an assessment of their impacts (as concretely as possible), along with the conclusions. This section can be used to highlight policy-related challenges connected to the project or research work, or other new challenges that have arisen over the course of the project.

4.4 Recommendations for action

This section provides a clear description of the most concrete recommendations possible. Decision-makers are interested in practical solutions and the effects of different options. Be careful not to water down the recommendations.

4.5 Inquiries

This section should list the authors and their contact details, along with any logos. It also indicates where to obtain the final report of the project (including the list of publications released in connection with the project/research, etc.). If you wish to mention a key publication, you can do so here.

Final remarks

It is advisable to review the recommendations for action together with the project steering group/supervisor, but ultimately they should represent the view and recommendations of the party carrying out the project. The recommendations for action are not a replacement for the final report. Instead, they are meant to “inspire” the reader and entice them to read more on the topic, for example in the report.

It is wise to put effort into writing the recommendations for action. By promoting the dissemination of research data, we can increase our understanding of our operating environment and facilitate the work of decision-makers. In addition, these recommendations may help to raise new and important topics for further research.

Finalise the text and consider whether each paragraph supports the objective. Think again about the primary target groups for your message and take their level of knowledge and information needs into account as well as possible; communicate your message in a format that is as easily accessible as possible. “Save the recipient's time, not yours”, especially when approaching decision-makers.

Technical guidelines

Fonts

- Main title: **Arial 16 bold**

- Subtitle: **Arial 14 bold**

- Text field: Arial 10 with text aligned to the left

- Pull quotes: **Arial 10 bold**

General formatting

The document should have a margin of about 6 cm on the left side where any pull quotes are placed (e.g. 1.25 cm from the edge), and the right margin should be around 2 cm.

The recommended languages for the report are Finnish and Swedish, as the main target groups are policymakers, business life and advisory bodies.