

INNOVATION ROADMAP 2035

Part one –
Strategic goals



UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI



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“Our success will be based on in-depth and innovative discipline-specific knowledge, interdisciplinary research and teaching of a high standard.”

University of Helsinki's strategy 2030

INTRODUCTION

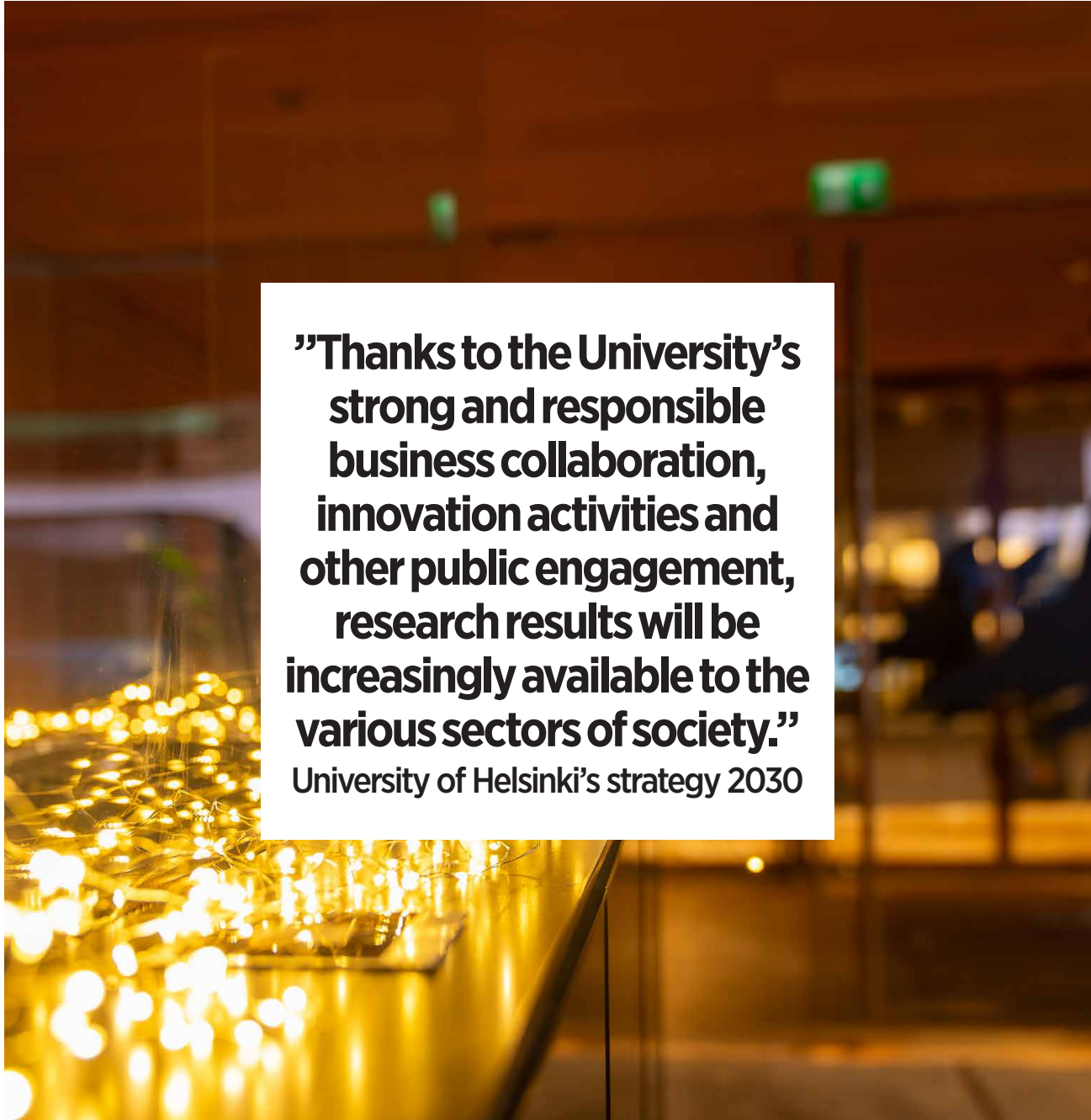
With the power of knowledge – for the world

Research and knowledge-based innovations play a major role in enhancing the well-being of people and society.

As a multidisciplinary and high-ranking research university, our community has vast potential for innovation – both in traditional ‘innovation’ disciplines and increasingly in the human and social sciences.

In all innovation activities, we build on the foundation of our high-quality research and education. We transform results and new ideas into a wide range of solutions, products, and services – innovations – that have a positive impact on people, society, and the economy, and help build a sustainable future.

This innovation roadmap builds upon previous efforts in innovation and entrepreneurship and aligns with the University of Helsinki’s strategy. It serves as a strategic guide, outlining our long-term goals and dedication to fostering an innovation culture and community. This roadmap describes our commitment to the ambitious development of innovation activities, while also allowing space for new ideas and pilot initiatives.



“Thanks to the University’s strong and responsible business collaboration, innovation activities and other public engagement, research results will be increasingly available to the various sectors of society.”

University of Helsinki’s strategy 2030

About the Innovation roadmap

The development of this innovation roadmap has been a collaborative process, involving dialogue and discussion with our community through workshops, meetings, interviews, and online platforms.

Pre-studies on campuses, SWOT analyses, and insights from benchmark universities have helped in the creation of our vision, goals, and actions. Pioneering work on innovation in many faculties and units has created a foundation for university-wide goals and plans.

The roadmap consists of two parts. This document, part one, details the strategic vision and seven goals for 2035 that address aspects like innovation culture, services, tech transfer, and partnerships. Part two - action plan

outlines key actions for 2024–2027, with tentative plans for the following years.

The roadmap will be implemented as part of the university's overall management and operational planning. A large part of the budget will be covered by external funding.

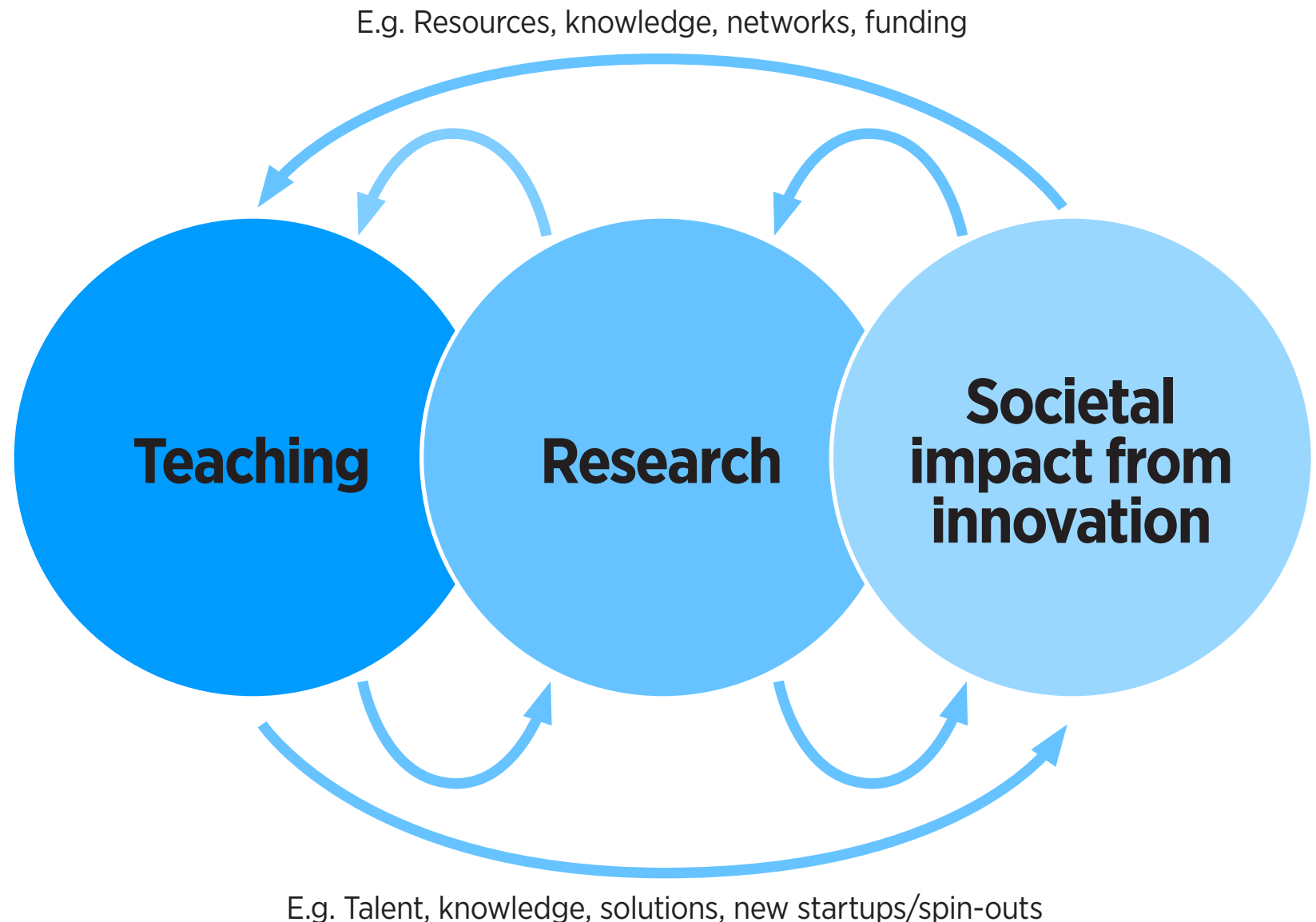
As the field of innovation and the operating environment evolve rapidly, the action plan will be flexibly reviewed and complemented with actions led by different faculties, institutes, and units.



Innovations within the University of Helsinki

At the University of Helsinki, innovation activities are understood as all the activities that focus on transforming ideas and discoveries from high-quality research and teaching into new solutions, products, and services for the benefit of society, the environment, and the economy.

- Innovation cannot exist without a strong teaching and research base.
- Innovation activities support the university's mission for societal impact.
- Innovation activities provide resources, knowledge, contacts, and funding back to the university's teaching and research missions.



Vision for innovation activities

In 2035, the University of Helsinki is one of the Nordic leaders in research and knowledge-based innovation and entrepreneurship, strengthening the societal and economic impact of research for the good of Finland and the world.

By 2035, we aim to be among the Nordic leaders

GOAL

By 2035, we aim to be among the leading Nordic universities in innovation and entrepreneurship. To achieve this:

- We provide opportunities for researchers and students to develop their skills in innovation, entrepreneurship, and work-life both within and beyond academia.
- We strengthen our engagement with the private sector, build high-quality incubation and technology transfer services, and attract EU and other external innovation funding.
- We promote interdisciplinary innovation and research across the University, as innovation is born from diversity and the creative interplay between different competencies and partners.
- We build collaboration with a diverse range of innovation partners and leading innovation ecosystems both locally and globally.
- We create an environment and culture that makes innovation, entrepreneurship, and business collaboration appealing prospects for researchers and students across disciplines.
- We make innovation easier, offer professional services, and recognise participation in innovation activities as a merit.

By reaching our goals through research, education, and innovation, we build a stronger university and foster new innovation-driven, sustainable economic growth in Finland.

RESOURCES

7 GOALS FOR 2035

4 'must win goals' and 3 supporting ones

1 Culture and skills

We have a strong innovation culture and an active community of student and researcher innovators creating new solutions to local and global challenges.

2 Incubation and technology transfer

We are one of the leading Nordic universities in creating research and knowledge-based spinouts and startups.

3 EU and external funding

We attract significant amounts of external funding for innovation and new research.

4 Business engagement

We are one of the most desired academic innovation partners in Finland for the private sector.

5 Support and services

We support innovation and entrepreneurship with high-quality services and by building cooperation with the world's leading academic and industrial ecosystems.

6 Assets for spinout growth

We use our networks and wide range of assets to support the growth of university-born companies.

7 Innovation in the University's brand

Innovations are a meaningful part of our main brand, and we are internationally recognised as a university that creates innovations.

Key principles that guide our innovation activities

→ We foster a strong innovation culture, help students and researchers develop their innovation skills, and encourage them to participate in innovation activities. Innovation activities are seen as a valued part of academic studies and researcher careers.

→ We support innovation across different fields, recognising the diversity of ways we can apply knowledge to solve real-life challenges.

→ We provide services to those interested in transforming research and knowledge-based ideas and discoveries into real-life solutions, and we inspire those who are not yet aware of the possibilities and benefits of innovation activities.

→ We actively collaborate with the private sector, government and their agencies, academia, research institutes, NGOs, associations, networks, and other stakeholders to strengthen interdisciplinary research and innovation.

→ In the long term, different innovation activities must contribute to the increased societal impact of research and generate new income for the university, which can then be used to support research and education.

→ We consider innovation an integral part of our university's activities, aiming to scale it up to achieve significant impact. Just as our research goal is to be among the best in the world, the long-term goal in innovation is equally ambitious.

Expected outcomes (Key performance indicators)

We aim for transformative change in our culture, impact, and driving sustainable innovation in the long term.

To measure both the long-term change and yearly achievements, we have identified a comprehensive set of key performance indicators (KPIs).

We measure both action and output with KPIs connected to the suggested

goals and actions. In the short term, many of the KPIs focus on measuring actions to verify that we are doing the right things and moving in the right direction. The output KPIs or end goals become increasingly meaningful towards the 2035.

In addition, we have set several KPIs that measure the change in the culture of innovation and our community's mindset towards innovation activities.

Main KPIs for 2030

- Increasing share of researchers and students interested in innovation and engaging in innovation activities
- Significant increase in the number of invention disclosures and funded commercialisation projects
- Increase in the number of UH-born companies created from incubation
- Significant increase in new EU and Business Finland innovation funding
- Large share of UH students and researchers completing basic innovation and entrepreneurship courses
- Significant increase in new corporate partnerships and private RDI funding

Faculties and research institutes are at the core of innovation

The implementation of the roadmap is a collective effort for the whole university community. All innovation activities depend on the active roles of researchers and students, with different innovation services offering support. Hence, innovation activities should increasingly be a part of long-term planning and everyday operations in all faculties and units.

A large part of the activities takes place in forerunner faculties and areas with high innovation potential, especially where these two overlap.

Forerunner faculties are those that invest in innovation, such as promoting innovation within their research and student communities, developing innovation skills, and seeking cooperation with the private sector and other external parties. Forerunner faculties have a key role in developing and piloting new policies and actions before they are adopted throughout the university.

Areas with high innovation potential are characterised by identified market or societal needs, interested private or public partners, accessible RDI funding, applicable research strengths, and a body of researchers and students interested in engaging in innovation.

Overlapping areas present prime opportunities for establishing leading thematic innovation hubs, incubators, and ecosystems to boost innovation. These include areas where we are already active, like health/pharma, AI, food, and education, as well as newly emerging areas.

As innovation picks up pace throughout the university, all faculties can build their innovation capacities and their unique approaches. This allows for agile implementation and considers differences in external needs and opportunities.

Resourcing of Innovation Activities

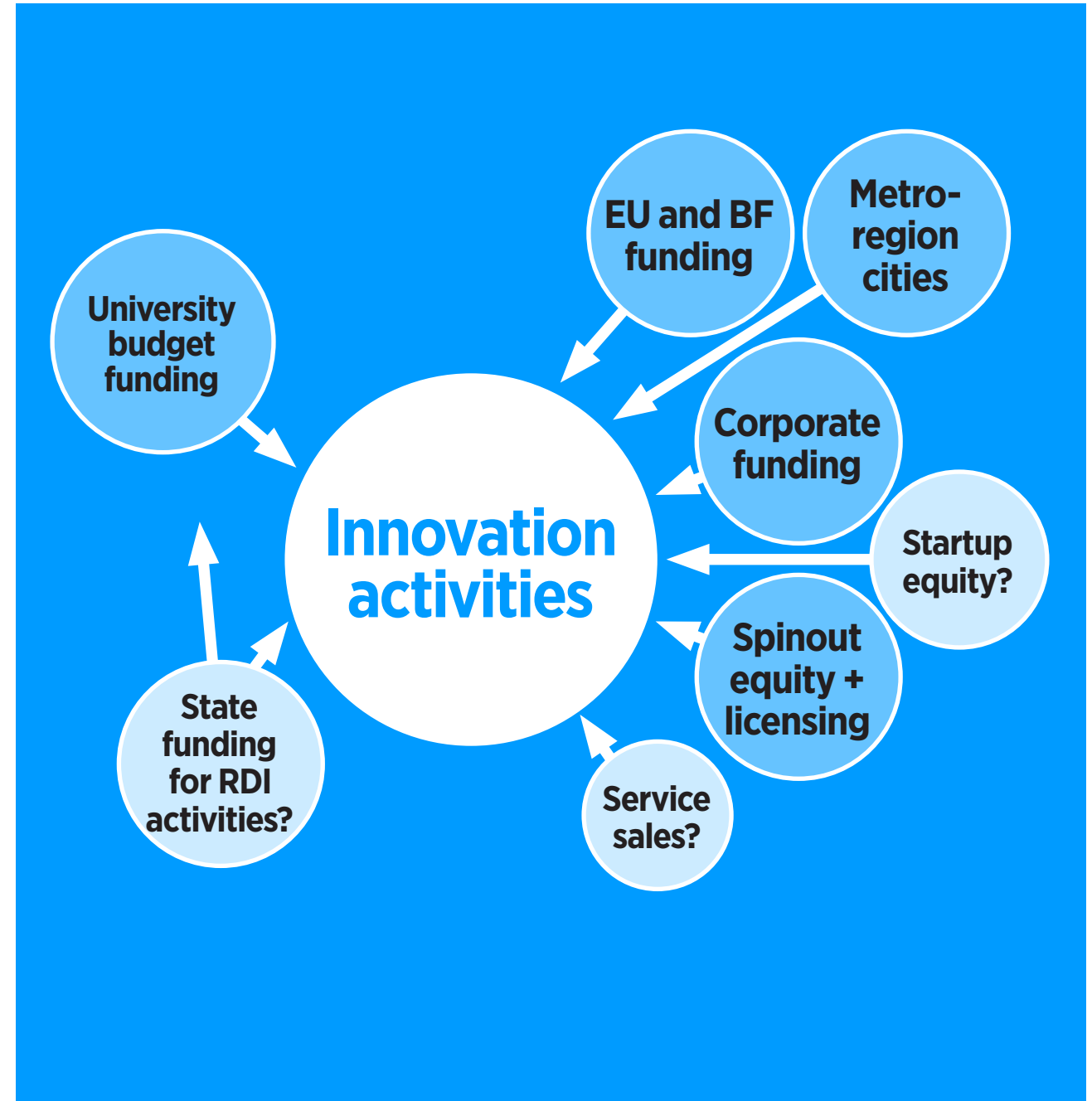
Becoming one of the top universities that create innovations requires substantial long-term funding for core innovation activities. The more ambitious goals, such as increasing the number of spin-outs, require operational improvements, investments, and new resources.

The University's own funding can and should be supplemented with external funding and assets. These can include project funding, sponsorships, and jointly created services.

Some activities, such as spin-outs, licensing, corporate research, service sales, and EU projects, can create direct income. In other cases, potential income and impact come

from the more diffuse and combined effects of different innovation activities and from creating an innovation ecosystem around the University. For example, University-born companies procuring services from, and initiating new research with, the University, or establishing a high-impact start-up ecosystem that makes the University an attractive partner for large corporations seeking access to talent, acquisition of assets, and collaborative RDI.

Part of the income can also be indirect, in the form of increased public funding due to our brand and the positive economic impact our innovation activities generate.



Benefits of innovation activities

Innovation activities provide ways to create solutions to real-life global problems, increase the societal and economic impact of research, and accelerate economic growth in Finland.

**For Finland
and the world**



Engaging with leading innovation ecosystems and different partners provide access to new research funding, infrastructures, assets, and opportunities.

**For the university,
students, and
researchers**



Innovations can contribute to the financial sustainability and independence of the university and generate income for researchers and students.

**For the university,
students, and
researchers**



Innovation and entrepreneurship education gives students, staff, and researchers new skills for the evolving work life and offer a wider range of career opportunities.

**For students and
researchers**



Commitment to innovation can boost the university's reputation and visibility leading to wider range of research opportunities, partnerships, and talent attraction.

For the university



Comments from the University of Helsinki's academic community

“The university has a responsibility towards the wider society, and a big part of it is to ensure that research and knowledge are transformed into practical solutions. It is also important that the university takes part in creating economic growth for Finland.”

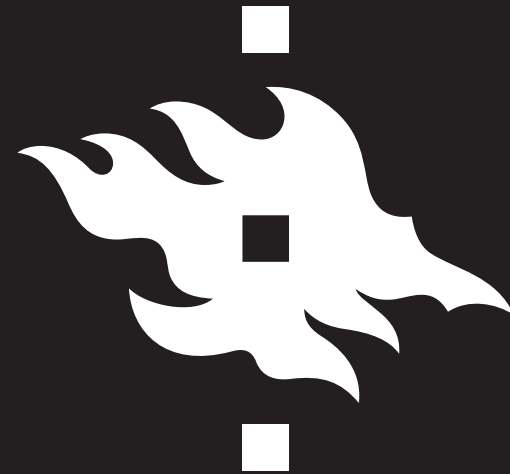
“In today's world, engaging with and finding ways to support innovation is simply not a choice – it is a necessity and a potential competitive advantage.”

“Without deep collaboration between academia, industry, and the public sector, there will be significantly fewer breakthrough research or innovations.”

“The incubator was really helpful for me to get into innovation and entrepreneurship. The really good mentors and team taught me so much and gave me a new innovation mindset, language, and way of thinking.”

“In the long run, innovation capacity constitutes the necessary socio-economic foundation for basic research, whether this comes as direct funding to the university from different projects and partnerships or indirectly from national funding.”

“Innovation and entrepreneurial skills and language are also needed to increase our share of research funding.”



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