

Call for “SPARK Proposals” to enhance Translation

SPARK Finland supports development of **novel therapeutics, diagnostics, health technologies and health IT solutions** for unmet medical needs with its proven **two-year program**.

Any clinical indication will be considered. SPARK projects receive

- mentorship from industry experts
- education in workshops on “how to develop a solution” and “what you need to understand about business and finance”, and
- access to global network of SPARK programs and their affiliates.

We accept projects already in the idea phase, not only those that are more advanced. We accept applicants that don't have funding at the moment or have own financial resources (Research-to-Business or local innovation grants) that cover the costs of development work. Program is able to provide small financial support based on the accomplishment of milestones. In exchange team needs to commit to the program and participate in our mentoring and educational events. Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of:

- Scope of unmet need in area of life science, medicine or health
- Novelty of approach
- Feasibility (point of maturity to be achieved within the time frame)

Some examples of past projects in global SPARK programs include unmet needs in pediatric, orphan diseases, cardiovascular, oncology, inflammatory, respiratory, neurological, autoimmune indications and infectious disease.

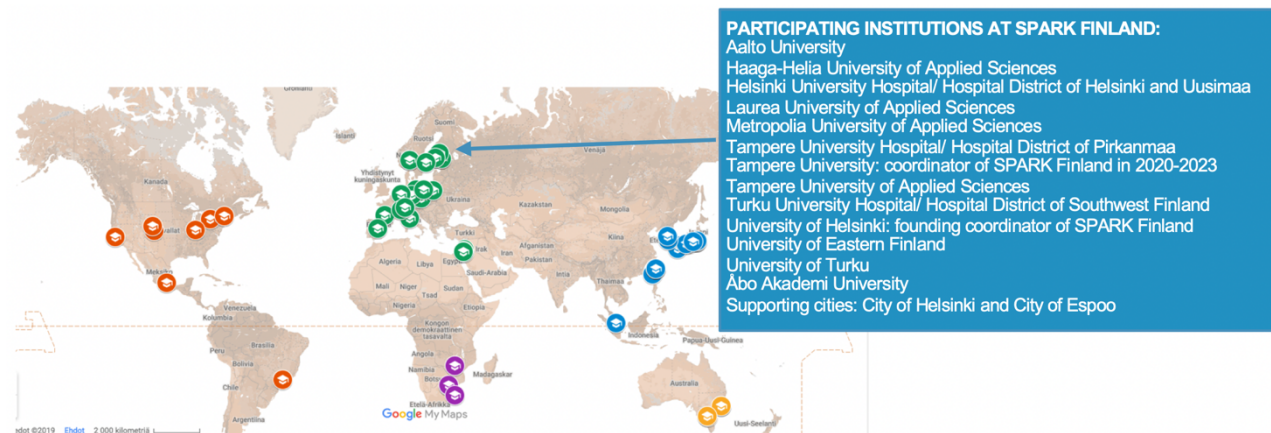
YOUR OPPORTUNITY

Are you investigating basic mechanisms of disease? Are you sitting on a new technology or potential pharmacotherapy with clinical potential, yet the developmental know-how is lacking? Join the SPARK Finland program (<https://sparkfinland.fi>) to *increase the maturity of your project towards practical and value creating solution* for human health! We help you to understand what is needed to develop your project. We also connect you with the top-level mentors and integrate you and your team to leading global networks that enables building your own market understanding and getting relevant feedback from top-tier professionals.

OUR CONCEPT

The current success rate of translating novel scientific finding into new diagnostics, medical devices or therapies is disappointingly low at academic institution - across the globe (less than <5%). There are various reasons for that depending on local ecosystems. In any case the most important factor for improving the success rate is **inventor's aspiration in taking the responsibility** for advancing the development of the idea towards practical solution. And that is our focal point.

The “SPARK Finland” program is designed to **support idea-owners in increasing the maturity of ideas towards a working and value creating solutions**. We enable de-risking projects with high potential impact on unmet medical needs for any indication. Program is based on the highly successful “SPARK” program developed at Stanford University (<http://sparkmed.stanford.edu/>), which has achieved a translational success rate of > 50%, through education, mentorship, advising and small milestone-based funding. Currently program is running in more than 20 countries and SPARK Finland is associated with 13 institutions (Picture 1).



Picture 1. SPARK Global and SPARK Finland on map.

As a SPARKEE you will get:

- **Mentoring and advice** from national and international industry leaders who will help you to develop your idea towards working commercial or clinical solution
- **Support and experiences** from SPARK managers and other SPARKEEs
- **Access to international institutions and networks** as a member of SPARK Global network
- **Opportunities to participate and present your idea** in international industrial events such as BioEurope, Bio Investor Forum etc. SPARK will support financially travels to international events
- **Education** on R&D and Business development in drug, medical device and diagnostics or health IT
- **Small financial contribution** to de-risk your project e.g. travel grants to international events.
- **Access to investors and experts** on commercialization

As a SPARKEE you need to:

- **Make two-year development plan** with milestones for your idea/project
- **Meet the SPARK managers** regularly during the program (once per quarter)
- **Present your project** development 2-3 times per year in mentoring sessions
- **Participate actively in mentoring sessions** held every second Tuesday from 5-7pm even you are not presenting your own case, it is mandatory that team member participates each time.
- Select and **participate 1-2 international business/commercial** events annually
- **Participate the education** and follow the lectures and materials actively
- **Be committed** to take your idea to the next level

ELIGIBILITY

Any Helsinki metropolitan area, Kuopio/Joensuu, Turku or Tampere region team (faculty, clinician, postdoctoral fellow, or graduate student team) from our affiliated institutions is welcome to apply. The application must be co-signed by the project team or research group leader. Institutions that are members and/or associated to SPARK Finland are presented above in picture 1.



HOW TO APPLY

Step 1: In case you have an idea contact the SPARK managers for discussion as soon as possible about your idea and its suitability to SPARK program.

Step 2: Use the application form available at the [SPARK Finland website](#) and submit a two-page application of your proposed therapy, medical device, diagnostic or health IT solution that addresses an unmet medical need or utilizes a novel approach for any indication. Apply by **November 30th 2020** by sending your proposal in pdf format to apply@sparkfinland.fi . Please note that applications must be submitted before the call **deadline at 16:00**.

Step 3: Be selected by our SPARK Team and get an invitation to pitch your project to our external SPARK Advisory Team held on **December 7th between 15.00-20.00**.

Step 4: Selected projects will receive mentoring, education, guidance, access to global SPARK network and travel grants to international life science business events. The program starts for selected projects in **January 2021**

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