



Grants of Automation Foundation (Automaatiosäätiö)

(Last updated 22 Aug. 2024, Olli Ventä)

Who are eligible to grant?

The purpose of Automation Foundation is to

- support and promote research on automation
- support participation of Finnish or foreign researchers in Finland and postgraduate students in international scientific conferences
- support hosting international conferences in Finland
- support publications, production of scientific, professional and trading literature,
- support maintaining respective infrastructures
- to support any other activities or initiatives dealing with automation in Finland.

Applicants should preferably be **private persons** but, depending on case, working groups for some activities are welcome. Sometimes societies, companies, etc., can act as applicants.

Automation Foundation does not support usual or normal basic studying at universities. Here we mean all studying targeting a master's level or lower.

Grants can be used only for the purposes accepted by the governing board of Automation Foundation, and as indicated in the acceptance letter/email. The grants are exempt from taxation.

Conferences

A majority of grants deal with travel costs to international and scientific conferences. The first rule for a travel grant is that the applicant is **one of the authors of the paper** accepted to the conference, and that the **author also gives the respective presentation** at the conference, oral or poster. On exceptional conditions, a substitute can give the presentation. In case of multiple authors, only one per paper can get a grant.

The second rule is that **there must not be overlapping funding** for the conference trip, but Automation Foundation may be one funding source in a compound funding. One reason to cc: decisions on travel grants to supervising professors or other people of leading position is to collectively control this matter.

A travel grant usually does not cover all expenses that employers normally compensate based on respective collective agreements. Eg., daily allowances are common in Finland but are not included in grants.

Automation Foundation can pay the grant to the employer's account and the employer may compensate your travel expenses more extensively, conditioned that the travel compensations are exempt from taxation, as they normally are.

Submit your travel grant applications in good time beforehand, preferably **at least 2 months** before the conference. **If you receive your acceptance letter less than two months before the conference, you must submit your application within two weeks after you received the acceptance letter.**



For conferences we expect to have:

- conference title, acronym, dates, city, country
- For rare or small conferences, give a short description of the conference and its significance in your research.
- About your paper: title, all authors, who will present the paper and the email of the applicant. The topics of your paper and the conference must deal with automation, in a broad sense.
- A copy of the acceptance mail or respective notice. Or, a copy of the conference program indicating your presentation. Don't just send a www link to conference pages! If the program is long, a 2-3 pages extract is enough, provided your presentation can be seen.
- Name and email of your supervisor or foreman. The decision of the grant is always cc'ed to the supervisor, too.
- Mention whether or not you are a member of the Automation Society of Finland (Suomen Automaatioseura, SAS).
- Automation Foundation gives structured and fixed amounts of travel grants, depending on the continental location of the conference. The target continents and their fixed portions of the grant are as follows:

Northern Europe, Europe, Middle-East, North Africa	1000€
North America	2000€-3000€
South America, Caribbean	2700€
Japan, China, mainland Asia, South Africa	2000
Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii	2800€

- For travels to North America, by default the fixed portion is 2000€. If the actual expected travel costs exceed considerable, higher costs can be accepted if justified and reasonable breakdown of cost estimates (flights, hotel, reg.fee) are presented, up to 3000€.
- For applicants from Northern Finland, e.g., Oulu, add 250€.

Formula for grant:

Travel Grant = continent wise fixed part + registration fee (+ 100€ from Northern Finland)

Extras, etc.:

- In few cases, when visas are needed to attend the conference, the costs to get the visa can be added to the total grant. Similarly, costs for health condition certificates, vaccinations, etc., are regarded as abnormal if requested, and they can be added to the total grant.
- If your real travel costs are essentially different, please give a respective cost break-down (flights, hotel, reg.fee) and a total cost. Note that this is really



regarded as a rare and special case (a remote conference site, etc.) and such cost-break downs must always be realistically explicated. A great majority of conferences are held in normal travel destinations but sometimes the fixed part may be far too low.

After the conference, each beneficiary of a travel grant must write a short and free text description about the conference, about the important topics at the conference, to be tentatively published in the Automaatioväylä magazine. Alternatively, the reports may be published electronically on the Automation Foundation or the magazine related web pages. See instructions further below.

A major part of the travel grant is usually paid no earlier than 1 month before the conference. A 200€ fraction of the grant is retained as a kind of deposit or guarantee which will be paid after Automation Foundation has received the above mentioned travel report, including the description text, travel start and end dates, and the travel destination.

General instructions for the travel description:

- Be informative, describe new or relevant topics of automation discussed or presented at the conference. If the conference had a broad focus, limit your report according to your own interests, etc.
- Write 1-2 pages of text. If there are several papers and participants/beneficiaries from your organization in the same conference, coordinate your reports, either write a joint report ($n * [1-2]$ pages), or make separate reports from different perspectives. A copy of your conference paper cannot be your travel report.
- Take a couple of pictures at the conference or in the city, etc. Submit pictures as separate files.

Send your travel report as an email attachment(s) both to office@automaatioseura.fi and to the secretary of board of Automation Foundation (olli.venta@outlook.com).

The payment of the remaining 200€ is bound to the travel report. You must submit it no later than two months after the conference, otherwise the actual travel grant will be reduced by that 200€.

If you are a member of any kind of international scientific or governing board/committee representing Finland or Finnish Automation Society (Suomen Automaatioseura, SAS), you can apply a travel grant to their scheduled meetings. You must have an invitation to such a meeting. Meetings are often organized in the context of conferences, and then you can also participate in the conference, too. Similarly, if you are invited to be a session chair, or have other significant roles in the conference, you are eligible to a travel grant.

Formerly, we had the general rule of one travel grant to one applicant per calendar year. Now you can freely apply as many travel grants as you have papers in conferences, board meetings, etc., mentioned above.

Automation Foundation supports also professionals of automation in private companies by offering travel grants to conferences. In general, the conditions for the grants are the same as for academic staff. An own paper accepted in the conference may not be needed,



if you justify your travel otherwise. The idea is to promote transfer of global knowledge from research to industrial practices.

Grants for finalizing doctoral theses

There are two kinds of postgraduate students in universities: full-time or part-time. The full-time students belong to the staff of the university (doctoral schools, etc.), and they are expected to work for their doctoral thesis at least 95% of time for four years, during which the theses are expected to be complete and accepted. A full-time postgraduate student may also be employed in other ways. Whereas, part-time students are accepted as postgraduates, heading to the doctoral degree according to a more flexible plan, without being employed by the university. Such postgraduates are typically working part or full time somewhere else, where academic research is allowed, enabled, or even encouraged.

Automation Foundation may support both full or part time doctoral candidates by compensating a 2-4 months' time out from regular work, for finalizing the thesis.

- The major portion of the thesis work must be done already, before the 2-4 months period for finalizing the thesis. The finalizing period typically deals with editing the thesis book itself but it may also consist of re-editings due to feed-back from pre-examination, etc.
- The applicant must define the start and end dates for the finalizing period. The period does not need to be consecutive full-time 2-4 months; you may plan part-time periods, or distribute writing periods in few reasonable smaller periods. Whichever fits to your situation.
- If the applicant has belonged to an above mentioned doctoral school but the thesis was not finished yet, the applicant must give a reasonable **explanation** for the delay. There may have been cuts in university finance or other interruptions, or sometimes there have been unexpected obstacles in advancing in research. For part-time postgraduates, it is sufficient to ascertain that you want to have a time out from your regular work to finish your thesis book.
- About the application:
 - Describe briefly the title, topics, targets, results publications of the thesis, etc., of your thesis - and your plan towards the dissertation. Half or one page of text is enough.
 - Attach a signed recommendation by your supervising professor **indicating that your thesis truly is mature enough so that the planned 2-4 months is realistically enough for the remaining work.**
- Max grant is 10.000€, corresponding to a full 4 months work. The grant will be paid in advance, in two phases: first half at the beginning the whole period, the second half at an estimated midpoint. Both the applicant and the supervising professor are obliged to report to Automation Foundation of any significant deviation of the plan. The midpoint is also a milestone or gate, meaning both the applicant and the supervising professor, and the secretary of Automation Foundation must unanimously agree that the second half of the period is sufficient for completing the thesis, before the second half of the grant will be paid.



- The grant may also include respective language checking, thesis printing, etc., expenses.
- In case the doctoral candidate is receiving other financial support for the final stages of the thesis work, the candidate must mention them in the application (funding source, funded sum, essential conditions). Each foundation is obliged to ascertain that there is no overlapping funding, but combined or coordinated funding schemes are possible.
- When the thesis is accepted or completed, the applicant must send a signed notice to the secretary of Automation foundation.
- It is common that press releases are written about each thesis. You must submit that also to Automaatioväylä (office@automaatioseura.fi).

Grants for research visits

Automation Foundation highly recommends young scientists to visit foreign universities, foreign private companies, etc. Applicants are encouraged to have a wider supporter or sponsor pool to cover the expenses of such visits but Automation Foundation is willing to take a considerable share of the costs. What is outlined here below, is intended for short, 2-6 months visits. For longer visits, please discuss directly with us.

Your application can be free format and short. For our decision, we need to know:

- Short research plan of the visit period, and how it is linked to your career, thesis, personal or university unit research goals, etc., whatever is relevant.
- Short CV of yourself indicating the relevant qualifications related to the visit (publications, theses and academic degrees, recent research or working experience)
- Publications plan of the visit, or other outcomes or targets.
- Description of your host university or laboratory, and your research conditions there.
- Written and signed statement of the host university or professor, that you have the position or permission to carry out the visit.
- Total costs estimates, decomposed into reasonable categories (travels, housing, salary, insurances, living costs, etc.). You may include the costs of your immediate family members (spouse, children under age, etc.)
- Finance plan: your university or employer, other public or private funding (name, amount, stage of decision), other foundations including Automation Foundation.

After your visit, write and send a short, 1-3 pages, report and photos on your visit. Write flexibly and non-formally about your work but also about the university, life in your host city or country, etc. The report text will be published in the digital or classical form of Automaatioväylä. Your scientific publications alone will not do here.

Normally and in typical cases, the grant of Automation Foundation will be max 6000€, less for shorter visits.



Grants for student excursions

Although we do not support basic studies, we are sponsoring foreign or domestic student excursions and a number of other events, etc., groups, student guilds, professional/topical societies, etc., of automation intends to carry out.

Typically, or normally, Automation Foundation can support max 5000€ and max 50% of the total expenses. For more extensive excursions and events, a wider financial basis or support pool may be appropriate.

Your application can be free format and short. For our decision, we need to know:

- Short excursion or event plan, including also relevant dates, places, list of participants, etc.
- For excursions, we need the list of universities, companies, and other sites to be visited. The support will be higher, when several automation or studies related sites can be indicated.
- Total costs estimates, decomposed into reasonable categories (travels, housing, insurances, etc.).
- Finance plan: your university or employer, other public or private funding (name, amount, stage of decision), other foundations including Automation Foundation, self-funding for excursions.

After your excursion or event, write and send a short, 1-3 pages, report and photos. Write flexibly and non-formally about what was professional but also about what else happened, felt, saw, experienced, etc., which is of interest to tell and read. The report text will be published in the digital or classical form of Automaatioväylä.

Grants for writing books

Writing books about automation is always recommended. Books are important for studying automation, guiding automation engineering, accumulating experiences, recording our history, promoting automation and creating good automation culture in general. Whenever possible, books supported by Automation Foundation should become the IPR or copy right of Finnish automation Society. Nevertheless, Automation Foundation may have interests in supporting books to appear in other arenas.

Furthermore, many public funded research projects are obliged to write publications to wider audience, and we encourage to choose Finnish Automation Society as an effective channel for disseminating project results. Depending on case, Automation Foundation may finance the entire book, or, which should be always considered, the editorial team gathers a pool of supporters or sponsors.

To write books needs a proper project plan, describing the intended contents, audience, editors, schedule, milestones, costs break-down, financing, and the suggested governing or support group (members from larger sponsors, the SAS office, board of SAS or respective section (jaos, toimikunta). Discuss in your plan also about printing format (paper, pdf, e-book), delivery channels, and printing format. Transition towards electronic formats is underway, and the project team should really consider carefully the intended printing volumes, etc. Experience on this matter is growing in the SAS office, etc. Also discuss in your project plan about the needs for extended or updated editions in



the forthcoming years, and how to organize feedback gathering, etc., although the actual plan may focus only on how to have the first edition.

Automation Foundation may finance an entire book project. From costs point of view but very much from premarketing point of view, a larger sponsor pool is preferred. Many organizations or companies may have an interest to have the book.

There are a number of book types:

- 1) **Plenty of editors.** Typically, a topical and up-to-date book about a certain domain, eg., *Voimalaitoskirja* (power plants) and *Tietoturvakirja* (security). Often, the burden of editing is distributed by chapters, etc., meaning such a book may have on the order of 10-20 editors. Often, the initiative to have such a book arises from a section of the Automation Society, and in such cases, the board of SAS appoints the project and its editing and governing team, follows up the editing progress, and accepts the outcome. We suggest to have a project leader or a leadership team. In recent projects, having a subcontracted chief editor who takes care of finalizing the draft text chapters of the volunteer editors, keeps the editing process in schedule and quality, perhaps writes certain sections by himself, etc., has been very effective and useful. A typical compensation for such a chief editor has been 20.000€, depending on case. It is also typical that some volunteer editors write most of the text drafts, and it is appropriate to give them a 5000 – 15000€ grant for the recognition of their efforts. The graphics, lay-out, proof reading and printing are typically subcontracted, and the Automation Society office has good contacts and practices about them. Likewise, the Automation Society also sells and distributes the book, especially if the rights of the book have been transferred to the Society.
- 2) **Monographs.** Very much like the above but here the book is edited by a single or rather few persons. The project organization may be simpler, typically the sole writer is responsible alone for the board of Automation Society, Automation Foundation, or the sponsors in general. The topics of monographs are diverse: memoirs, special technologies, text books, etc. Regarding taxes of grants, according to the official guidelines of Finnish Tax Administration (www.vero.fi), grants for scientific, artistic (and studying) actions are tax-free, up to some 24k€. Following the guidelines of The Association of Finnish Nonfiction Writers, monographs of automation often meet the criteria for tax-free grants (*luova kirjallinen työ*). Automation Foundation highly welcomes, tax-free or other, monographs and gives a grant of 5000€ – 15000€, for the recognition of a successful monograph, depending on the amount of work needed, the scientific or professional quality of the book, etc. – It should be noted that tax-free grants can only cover the creative editing work alone, graphics, lay-out, printing, etc., must be arranged outside the grant. The SAS office may help with these matters, as well.
- 3) **e-books.** Having books is surely in turmoil at the moment. Printed books are being left back and many kinds of electric books arise instead. Until recently, having e-books has simply meant distributing respective pdf's parallel to traditional books. However, nowadays the contents of books may become outdated fast, new science and knowledge appear soon, so the revising a book easily becomes a continuous process. Having e-books, revisions or editions become easier.



Grants for projects

There are many kinds of projects that Automation Foundation may find interesting to support. These include:

- Projects initiated by Automation Foundation itself
- Projects initiated by the cluster of Automation related societies (SAS, SMSY, Robotiikkayhdistys, etc.) or companies owned by Automation Foundation (Automaatioväylä Oy, ATU Oy). Typically such projects improve the elements, function, etc., of these organization, for the benefit of members and automation in general. Current example is digitalization of Automaatioväylä magazine.
- Projects for developing education facilities in universities or universities of applied science.
- Selected jointly funded R&D projects where Automation Foundation may choose to participate as co-funder. The main funding usually comes from BusinessFinland, European Union, Academy of Finland, EAKR, etc.
- Pooled finance projects, i.e., projects financed by several private companies, foundations, etc., including Automation Foundation.

Fortunately, there have been and still are plenty of opportunities to organize such projects, and Automation Foundation definitely can not support most of them. Certain general principles will be applied, such as:

- All projects must be automation projects. Although automation is a broad and evolving topic, in most cases, it is not difficult to decide, whether or not the project topics or focus is valid here.
- The project team, etc., must take actions to communicate the results, benefits, etc. to the wide Finnish automation audience, outside the project team.
- Selection of projects must be kept fair and balanced, meaning that at least on long run, a wide portion of the automation sector and topics are covered. However, the small resources of Automation Foundation may compromise this target.
- Foundations in general are meant to extend public founding resources, and therefore, many principles and guidelines are directly applicable here, as well.
- In larger projects, Automation Foundation in most cases, remains a minority supporter, and typically does not request any IPR, etc., created by the project.
- Automation Foundation wants to appoint a member in the management or support group of the project. Automation Foundation also wants to be informed about the progress of the project, intermediate and final reviews, etc.

Further instructions on project categories:

1) **Projects initiated by Automation Foundation**

The projects must follow the rules of the foundation and the national law.

2) **Projects initiated by the cluster of Automation related societies (SAS, SMSY, Robotiikkayhdistys, etc.) or companies owned by Automation Foundation (Automaatioväylä Oy, ATU Oy).**



3) **Projects for developing education facilities in universities or universities of applied science**

The laboratory and teaching facilities of automation related faculties, laboratories, etc., at academic and applied science universities need constant development. Typical volumes may be 300-500k€, meaning that there must be a major (public) financier, eg., EAKR, together with a number of minority financiers, and Automation Foundation can be one of them. Other financiers typically include private companies, municipalities, other foundations, etc. The share of Automation Foundation can be on the order of 20-50k€, or as other minority financiers. Typically university own funding is also required but Automation Foundation may also back up such.

For decision making in the board of Automation Foundation, we need to have the full project plan or proposal for the project. Early contacts are welcome for discussions.

4) **Jointly funded R&D projects**

This is a new kind of support from Automation Foundation! Typically, these are large jointly funded R&D projects, and over 50% of the financing comes from public funding (national, EU, cities, etc.). Often the actual partners of the project must self-finance the projects but often other financiers are also accepted, and this is where Automation Foundation may decide to step in. As above, the share of Automation Foundation can range between 20-50 k€ per project.

Public financiers often organize calls for proposals, and the competition for actual funding is hard. Therefore, committing to a proposal and committing to an accepted project may represent a dilemma, for Automation Foundation at least from overall funding point of view.

Obviously, there will always be much more proposals and projects to fund than we have capacity to react. We intend to create rules, principles or criteria for selecting the proposals. Here are a number of matters to start with:

- We try to synchronize our decisions according to major calls for proposals of public financiers. When there are automation specific topic on their agendas, Automation Foundation is active and may give further instructions. But a lack of automation related themes is also a reason to be active.
- An important but seldomly or difficultly publicly financed topic may be an interest for us. Examples include standardization, supporting SME companies.
- Being catalytic. Get new things going via a preproject, etc.
- Helping young automation people in entering the professional domain.
- Requesting project consortia of several academic and industrial partners and financings serves also the purpose of networking academia and companies. Automation Foundation does not intervene in the consortia in a manner which dilutes this goal. Automation Foundation wants to catalyze in a proper and useful way.



- The majority of shares of Automation Foundation varies between 20k€ to 50k€ per project or proposal.
- Automation Foundation refrains of supporting the same partners or similar topics for too many times in row. The rule for fair and balanced commitments must be kept in place, on long run.
- Discussions among other financiers, major or minority, are always welcome. Early discussions with key partners of intended proposals are necessary.
- For decision making in the board of Automation Foundation, we need to have the full project plan or proposal.

Application and decision (all grant categories)

Beyond the above grant categories, Automation Foundation is keen on hearing about any activity in Finland that increases, expands, etc., the success of automation. Applications can be free format. In overall, we need to know the purpose (must deal with automation), cost estimate and cost break-downs, expected benefits or impacts depending on the grant. For conferences and theses, instructions are more structured but for other possible purposes, reasonable and free format.

You can submit applications any time, there are no calls for applications or dead-lines. The board of Automation Foundation has meetings roughly every two months where applications are discussed and decided. In special circumstances, you may ask for a quicker process, and we may take decisions by email among the board members.

Applications must be appointed to Automation Foundation (Automaatiosäätiö), in Finnish, Swedish or English. Submit application to the office of Finnish Automation Society, preferably by email attachment(s). Normally, applications must reach the office at least 12 days before the governing board meeting, to have enough time for us to prepare the decisions.

The decision will be communicated by email both to the applicant and his/her supervisor. The notice email also contains further instructions about the grant transactions, etc.

As often mentioned in the communication of the board decision, for practical transactions regarding the grant, you are kindly asked to contact directly to the office of the Finnish Automation Society (Suomen Automaatioseura r.y.), phone: 050 4006624, E-mail: office@automaatioseura.fi.

Cancellation of grant

Each grant must be used for the allocated purpose as indicated in the governing board decision. If this turns out to be impossible, the grant beneficiary must contact Automation Foundation without delay.

If traveling to a conference is cancelled or withdrawn, the grant beneficiary must a) communicate about the situation to the secretary of Automation Foundation, and b) initiate without delay all reasonably possible actions to save back as much as possible of the grant already paid. Flight tickets, hotel reservations, etc., all have their terms and procedures for cancellations. If travelling to a conference is cancelled due to causes that are independent of the grant beneficiary, Automation Foundation usually compensates all



costs that cannot be returned. Examples of such include exceptional weather conditions, disturbances in flight traffics, sudden increases of risks of safety, sudden health issues of the grant beneficiary or his/her close family.

Contact information: secretary (asiamies) of Automation Foundation, office of Automation Society, editorial office of Automaatioväylä

Secretary/asiamies: Olli Ventä, email: olli.venta@outlook.com, tel. 0400-618978

- Further guidelines, initial assessments, discussions about the contents and form of applications. Especially, if this written guideline does not give clear answers.
- Communication to the applicants about the board decisions, usually by email.
- Normal acceptances of the travel reports and other reporting about the grants. Respective communication to beneficiaries.

Office of Finnish Automation Society (Suomen Automaatioseura ry (SAS)):

Asemapäällikönkatu 12 B, FI-00520 Helsinki (Pasila), Finland.

phone +358 50 400 6624, [office\(at\)automaatioseura.fi](mailto:office(at)automaatioseura.fi), <https://www.automaatioseura.fi/>

- email address for applications
- actual paying transactions
- inquiries, information

Coordinator: Ms. Anu Randén-Siippainen, p. 050 400 6624,

anu.randen@automaatioseura.fi

Executive Manager: Ms. Sari Aronen, p. 044 7344113,

sari.aronen@automaatioseura.fi

Automaatioväylä magazine: office@automaatioseura.fi

- destination for travel reports

Accepted by the board of Automation Foundation, 15th August 2024

Contact information updated, 6th June 2026