

PoDoCo

Post Docs in Companies

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PoDoCo program

What is PoDoCo?

Post Docs in Companies, PoDoCo program, is a joint initiative of Finnish universities, industry and foundations. The aim of the PoDoCo program is to promote academic research supporting long term competitiveness and strategic renewal of Finnish companies, and the employment of young doctors in industry. PoDoCo facilitates novel meetings and matches of post docs and companies and offers young scholars funding from one source for academic research having strategic importance for Finnish companies. PoDoCo program is aimed for young doctors who have recently completed or will soon complete their doctoral degree. There is no limitations regarding the branch of science or branch of industry. Instead PoDoCo program is aimed for all branch of industries and all disciplines, e.g. natural sciences, engineering and technology, medical and health sciences, agricultural sciences, social sciences and humanities (OECD, Field Of Science And Technology Classification).

PoDoCo program is funded by PoDoCo foundation pool and companies participating in the program. For a PoDoCo researcher the program offers a research period followed by a targeted research period lasting all together 1-2 years. PoDoCo foundation pool offers research grants for the research period. After the research period the company hires the Post doc to deepen the research results and to create company specific insight. The result is a win-win situation where academic research is supporting the long term competitiveness and strategic renewal of Finnish companies and young doctors get industrial experience.

Why PoDoCo?

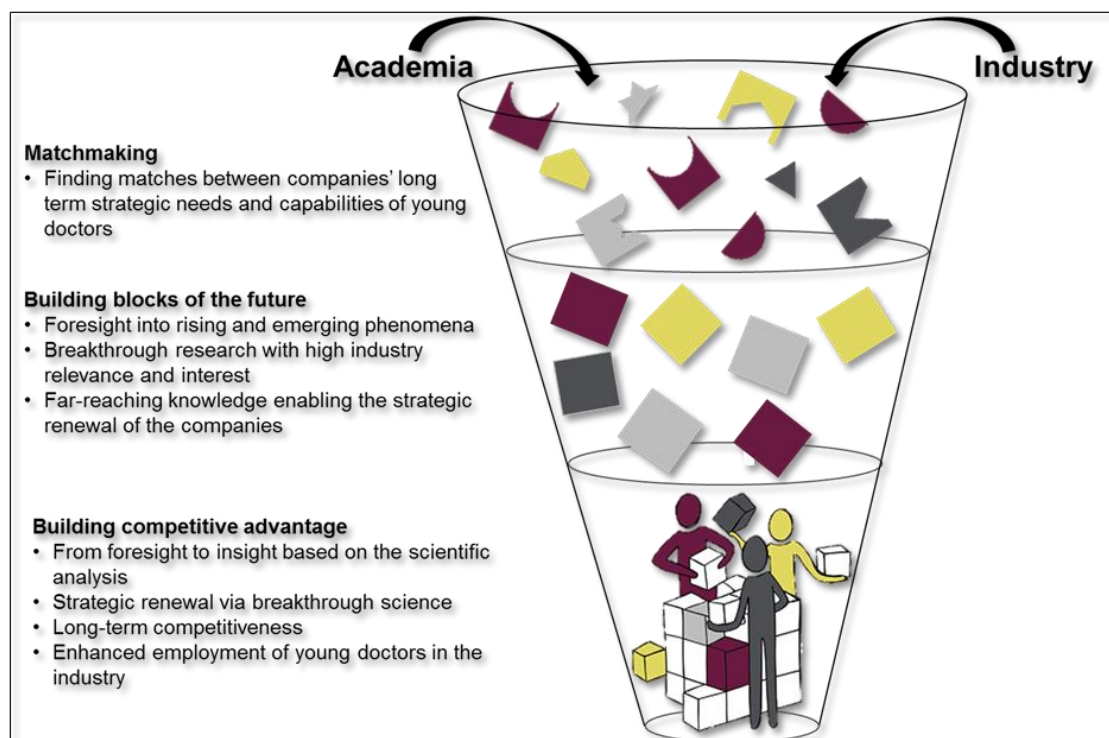
Finnish companies are facing a number of challenges. The economic growth has stagnated. Digitalization and its derivatives, like 3D printing, digital media and big data, is creating fundamental changes in many businesses and eliminates national practices. Immaterial services do not recognize national borders. Emerging economies are challenging our competitiveness in global markets. Tightening environmental regulations call for active search and development of innovative solutions.

Maintaining competitiveness and further strengthening it requires constant monitoring and analyzing of new technological and operational trends. Intensifying international competition requires that the company has not only the ability to implement the latest technological and functional innovations, but also actively create innovations. Research and development activities in companies focus on challenges and opportunities which already are visible and there is lack of time or capabilities to look beyond the strategic horizon of the company. Doctors are trained to attack demanding problems with scientific rigor. Around 1700 doctors graduate from Finnish universities each year. Compared to countries like Sweden, Germany and USA, the employment of doctors in industry is low. However, there are indications that also in Finland more young doctors would like to work in companies.

The strategic renewal of companies needs new talented people and new foresight into rising and emerging phenomena. These can be cultural, social, technological, commercial, or political, but they all may have effect on the company and it's opportunities in the market. In order to understand the new phenomena and benefit from them, companies need scientific work carried out by practically oriented post docs, who are familiar with scientific analysis and synthesis methods. In order to get companies' renewal to benefit Finnish society in total, there is need for Foundation funded research so that foresight related to the new phenomena are published openly. In order to create new welfare and wealth in society, there is need for company funding for a post doc to push foresight to insight based on the scientific analysis.

How it works?

PoDoCo program consist of three phases: 1) Matchmaking, 2) Research period and 3) Targeted research period.



The core idea of PoDoCo program

1. Matchmaking – Ideas for future growth:

DIMECC facilitates novel meetings and matches of post docs and companies. The aim of the matchmaking is to open possibilities of the future by identifying matches between industrial needs for strategic renewal and emerging scientific possibilities.

PoDoCo Company profiles and PoDoCo Post doc profiles can be filled in at PoDoCo websites. Profiles are used for matchmaking purposes. In addition, information and marketing events are organized in universities. At the same time real and concrete needs for strategic renewal are collected from companies. A bigger match making event is organized before PoDoCo application phase. In the matchmaking event Post docs have possibility to present their research plans to companies. Participating companies and Post docs receive matching information and suggestions made based on PoDoCo profiles.

2. Research period– Building blocks of the future:

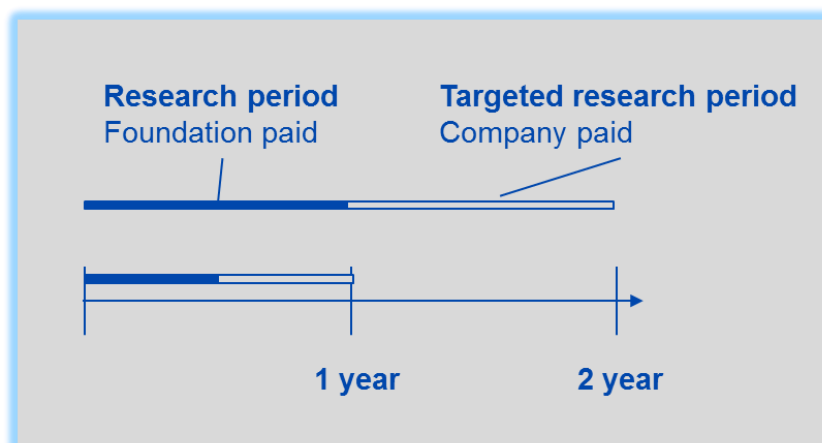
The aim of the research period is to create far-reaching knowledge enabling renewal and development of the industry. The research period is funded by PoDoCo Foundation pool.

After identifying potential a research topic with high industry relevance a post doc writes a research plan and makes a grant application to PoDoCo foundation pool. A signed letter of intent (LoI) indicating company's interest towards the research topic is needed for the grant application. PoDoCo Management Group with representatives appointed by each member foundation manages PoDoCo Foundation Pool. The Pool takes care of expert review of applications and preparatory work, after which the foundations involved will make the actual grant decisions. During the grant period Post docs reports to the Foundation normally and results are openly and freely published. DIMECC publish the summary of the research.

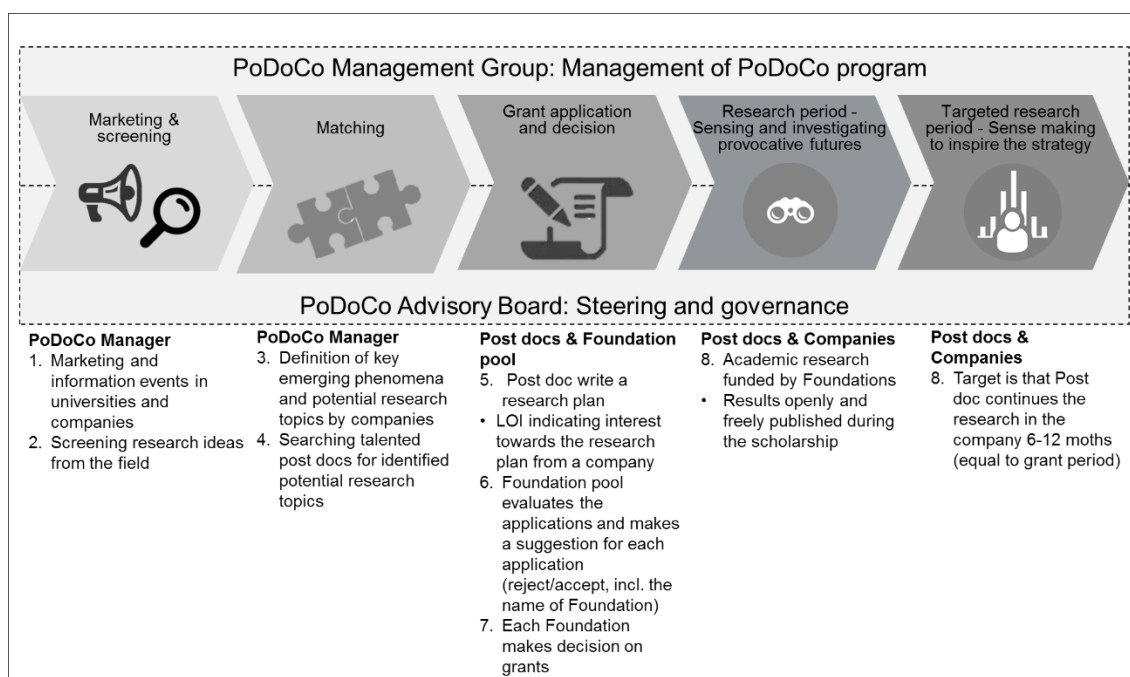
3. Targeted research period – Building competitive advantage:

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It is desirable that after the research period the Post doc is hired by the company to deepen the research results and to create company specific insight for a period of time equivalent to the period of the grant period. However, a Post doc is not legally committed to work for a company after the research period and the company is not legally committed to hire the Post doc. The aim of the targeted research period is to escalate scientific breakthroughs by pushing foresight to insight based on the scientific analysis. After these two research periods the post doc has acquired valuable research experience and some basic knowledge of the industrial environment. For the company the knowledge created may provide valuable guidance in its longer term strategic direction setting.

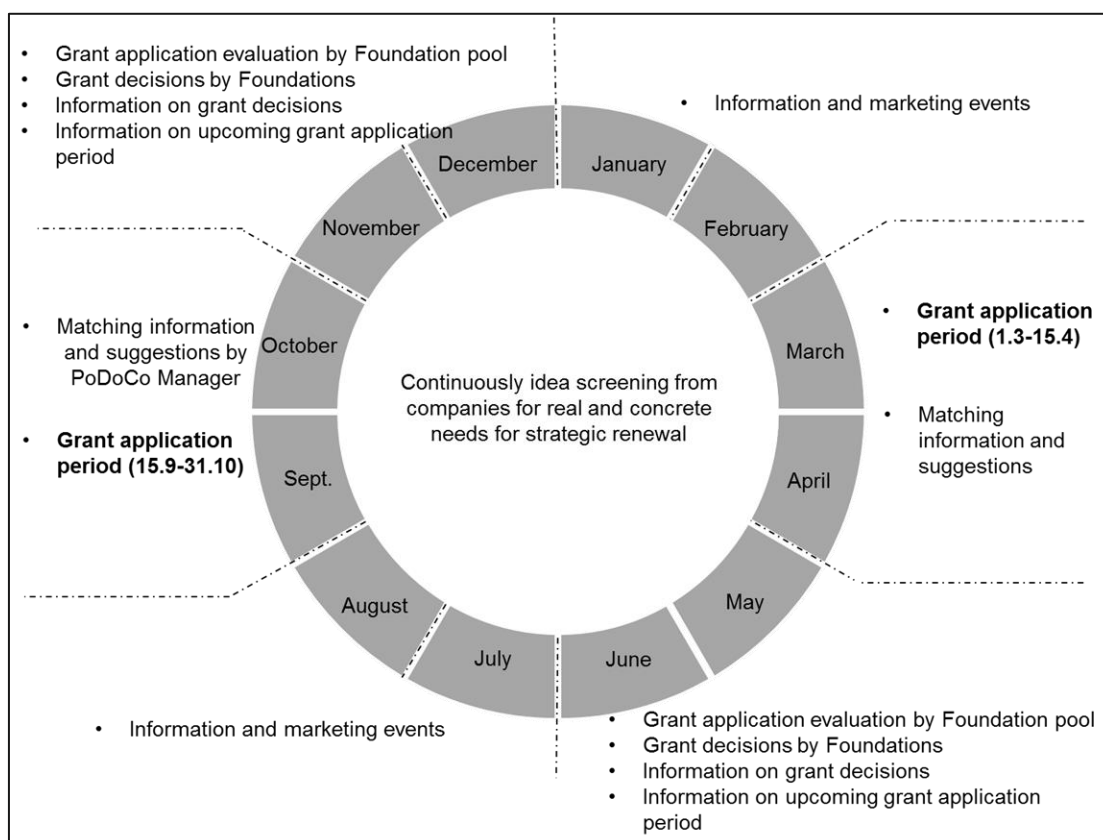


PoDoCo operating model and annual schedule are described in figures below.



PoDoCo operating model

PoDoCo 2023



PoDoCo annual schedule

How to participate

How to participate as a post doc?

Interest towards challenges of the companies, business-oriented thinking and willingness to work in companies are prerequisites for the participation of post docs. The aim of the PoDoCo program is create a win – win situation where academic research is supporting the long term competitiveness and strategic renewal of Finnish companies and young doctors get industrial experience. Hence, research is conducted on areas of direct industrial relevance.

DIMECC facilitates meetings and matches of post docs and companies. You can find a research topic with industry relevance by:

- Filling in PoDoCo Post doc profile indicating your research interest at [PoDoCo websites](#)
- Participating matchmaking events
- Utilizing your own company contacts

DIMECC makes continuous analysis by scanning the information and offers matching information and suggestions made based on PoDoCo profiles.

Detailed instruction and conditions for grant application are described in this guidebook in part "Grants".

How to participate as a company?

In order to benefit most from PoDoCo program companies need to have strategic vision on and desire to search opportunities lying beyond the current strategic horizon of the company. In addition, the company

should appoint adequate resources in order to perform the actions needed, such as guiding the research and analyzing the results of the research.

The duration of PoDoCo project is 1-2 years and it consist of two phases: research period and targeted research period. PoDoCo foundation pool offers research grants for the research period. After the research period the company hires the Post doc to deepen the research results and to create company specific insight for a period of time equivalent to the period of the grant period.

The commitment to the program is indicated by a letter of intent which is signed by the company and attached to the grant application. With the letter of intent the company declares its interest towards the selected research topic and intent to hire the post doc for a period of time equivalent to the period of the grant applied. However, a Post doc is not legally committed to work for a company after the research period and the company is not legally committed to hire the Post doc. Instead, the letter of intent serves as a sincere aim for an employment relationship to take place after the grant period and a serious commitment by both parties to try to make it happen.

DIMECC matches of post docs and companies. A company can participate to the program by offering potential research themes for post docs. Potential research themes can be defined by:

- Making PoDoCo company profile indicating your research interest at [PoDoCo websites](#)
- Participating matchmaking events

DIMECC makes continuous analysis by scanning the information and offers matching information and suggestions made based on PoDoCo profiles.

Grants

How much can I apply for?

PoDoCo foundation pool offers 6 to 12 months research grants for the research period. The time unit of research grants is one month. In other words, the sum you apply for will depend on the work's duration, which is typically one year. **A one-year research grant is EUR 32 000** (correspondingly 6 months: EUR 16 000, 9 Months: EUR 24 000)

It is considered that the statutory social contributions (approx. 15% of the total grant) and up to EUR 4 000 of common expenses arising from travelling, materials, equipment, workroom rental, and such are considered to be included in the grant sum.

Grants awarded by the PoDoCo pool are subject to statutory insurance, in accordance with the Farmers' Social Insurance legislation. The insurance is not obligatory for the share of the grant assigned for research expenses. The grant recipients must contact the Farmers' Social Insurance Institution Mela to find out whether they need to take the insurance. For further information: [Farmers' Social Insurance Institution Mela](#)

Grants awarded by PoDoCo program are tax-exempt up to the amount equivalent to the Finnish state grants for artists (2023: 24.965,04 €). For further information: [Tax Administration, Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers' tax guide](#), and [Council of Finnish Foundations](#)

The participating foundations decide by themselves the number of grants they will award. In addition, the participating foundations decide by themselves how much funding they will allocate to the PoDoCo pool annually.

Who is eligible to apply and what is funded?

The grants awarded by PoDoCo foundation pool are intended for academic research with high industry relevance for post docs who have recently completed their doctor research. The aim is that PoDoCo program

offers the first position to young doctor after the doctoral degree. Grants are also available for non-Finnish nationals. PoDoCo program is intended to support strategic renewal of Finnish industry, and PoDoCo undertakings need to have connection to Finland.

There are no limitations regarding the discipline of science or branch of industry. Instead PoDoCo program is aimed for all branch of industries and all disciplines, e.g. natural sciences, engineering and technology, medical and health sciences, agricultural sciences, social sciences and humanities (OECD, Field Of Science And Technology Classification).

The grant is to be used to pursue the plan set out in the application. The grant-funded work may begin only after the grant decision has been made. The tax exemption nevertheless applies only to grantee. The working grant is intended for full-time work and requires leave from regular salaried employment. The grantee may not receive salary from the company related to PoDoCo period. The grantee may not have had employment relationship with the company related to PoDoCo period in recent past.

Prerequisites for the grants:

- 1) Recently graduated PhD or PhD student graduating during next 6 - 9 months willing to work in companies
 - The applicants' doctoral degree was completed no more than four years previously (excluding maternity leave, military service and Non-military service)
 - Doctoral candidates, who have not yet graduated but graduating during next 6-9 months may also apply for a grant. In such cases assurance from guiding professor must be enclosed with the application. **The PoDoCo-project should be started before the following PoDoCo application round decisions are made.** (If funding is applied for in the fall, the project must start in May at the latest, and correspondingly, if applying in the spring, the project must start in November at the latest.). The grant will not be paid out until after the doctoral degree is completed.
- 2) Letter of intent (LoI) from the company indicating the interest towards the selected research topic and intent to hire the post doc after the research period for a period of time equivalent to the period of the grant applied.

How to apply grant?

The declaration of grant application rounds are informed through PoDoCo websites (www.podoco.fi). Further information about PoDoCo program and the application round is available on PoDoCo website.

Apply a grant by filling in the electronic application form and uploading required attachments at PoDoCo website. The electronic application must be sent within the application period.

The required attachments to the application include:

- 1) Abstract
- 2) Project plan (max. 5 pages)
- 3) Letter of intent
- 4) Curriculum vitae and list of publications
- 5) Doctoral degree certificate or assurance from guiding professor regarding the graduation (in case of not graduated doctoral candidates)
- 6) Possible references

The maximum amount of attachments is 15 pages. The attachments may be written in Finnish, Swedish or English, except for the abstract, which must be written in Finnish or Swedish.

The abstract

In your application, give a summary of your work plan stating the purpose for which you are applying for a grant, how you intend to execute your plan, and within what time frame. If possible, also state why it is important for you to obtain funding and why you are the right person to conduct this project. The maximum length is 2000 characters. The abstract must be written in either Finnish or Swedish.

Project plan

The project plan states clearly the objective of your work as well as its background and significance, say where you intend to execute the work and how industry is involved. **The plan must cover both research and targeted research periods.** The project and research plan must be concise and compact, max. 5 pages.

Curriculum vitae and list of publications

The curriculum vitae and the list of publications show in some detail the applicant's career to date. Pick out 1–6 items that support your application. The list of publications should include the applicant's most significant academic publications. See the [template](#).

Doctoral degree certificate

Assurance from guiding professor regarding the graduation or doctoral thesis pre-examiner's statement (in a case of doctoral candidates)

Doctoral candidates, who have not yet graduated but graduating next 6-9 months may also apply for a grant. In such cases assurance from guiding professor or doctoral thesis pre-examiner's statement must be enclosed with the application.

Letter of intent

Signed letter of intent (LoI) from the company indicating the interest towards the selected research topic and intent to hire the post doc for a period of time equivalent to the period of the grant applied. Please use PoDoCo LoI template.

References

References may be added to the grant application. References are not statutory.

Allow yourself plenty of time to prepare the application. Do not leave it to the last moment!

Is there any limitations for collaboration companies?

PoDoCo program is aimed for all branches and private sector companies operating in Finland are welcome to join the PoDoCo Program. **Please note that publicly owned/financed companies cannot be collaboration partner.** Such state owned/funded research institutes are Evira, GTK, FMI, Kotus, LUKE, Museovirasto, SYKE, STUK, THL, TTL, VTT and VATT furthermore all city owned public utilities **are not eligible** PoDoCo partners. This is consequence of the PoDoCo goal that is to increase number of postdocs in companies i.e. in private sector. However, the separate companies that VTT for example has established to commercialize research results are eligible partner.

Startup company can be collaboration partner but it should have financial resources to employ the post doc for after the grant funded period. This means that the company should have enough sales i.e. turnover, external funding or strong equity situation. Start-ups are requested to provide financial information in application phase.

Please note that applicant cannot be neither a shareholder nor employee of the collaboration company. PoDoCo-funding can be considered in the case when share of ownership is below 5% and applicant is one of many shareholders. Please contact before applying.

How is the grant application evaluated and funding decisions informed?

PoDoCo Management Group with representatives appointed by each member foundation manages PoDoCo foundation pool. The pool takes care of expert review of applications and preparatory work and makes a suggestion for each application (reject/accept, including the name of Foundation). The foundations involved will make the actual grant decisions.

Successful applicants will be informed of receiving a grant immediately after the funding decisions are made. The names of the grant recipients will be published at PoDoCo website and according to the standard practices of the foundation which has awarded the grant.

How the payment of grants and reporting on the use of the grant are organised?

The grants will be payable after they have been made public. In addition in a case of doctoral candidate who have not yet graduated the grant will not be paid out until after the doctoral degree is completed.

Grants are paid according the procedures of the foundation which has given the grant.

The grant recipient reports on the use of the grant to the foundation, according to their rules.

In addition, The PoDoCo program requires grant recipients to submit Final Reports. Please use the PoDoCo final report template to meet your reporting commitment. The final report should be submitted when the PoDoCo-project has ended (i.e. after the targeted research period ends). The report should also be sent in the event that the project ends earlier than planned.

Can awarded grant be deferred?

The use of an awarded grant may be deferred by six months, if the project plan remains the same. Decisions concerning longer deferrals are made by the PoDoCo Management Board case by case.

What are the NDA and IPR rules in PoDoCo program?

A post doc and a company can agree on NDA and IPR issues with each other. However, following principles set by PoDoCo Management Group set a legal framework for NDA and IPR rules.

Non-Disclosure Agreement

Regarding NDA agreement it is important that a post doc retain the right and possibility to publish scientific articles. On the other hand it is important to secure the confidential information of a company and avoid leakages of confidential information.

- The Company shall not restrict the Post doc's right to publish the results and findings related to the research topic generated during the grant period
- In principle NDA agreement covers a company's existing background information not foreground information generated during the grant period
- A Party having received Confidential Information shall keep such information confidential and use such information only for the purpose of carrying out its work under PoDoCo program and only to the extent necessary for the performance of its work thereunder.

Intellectual Property Rights

- The ownership and intellectual property rights to inventions created in PoDoCo program are held by the party who has generated the result.
- The ownership and intellectual property rights to inventions created by the grant recipient during the research period in PoDoCo program are held by the grant recipient.
- If result has been generated by more than one participant (e.g. by the grant recipient and employees of a company) then the participants have joint ownership of the result. The parties shall agree upon the terms and conditions of the joint ownership.
- The ownership and intellectual property rights to inventions created during the targeted research period, when postdoc is employed by the company are treated according to employment invention law (Laki oikeudesta työntekijän tekemiin keksintöihin 656/1967). This means that employer has ownership and IPR to inventions of their employees.

Management

How is the management of PoDoCo organised?

PoDoCo Management Group is responsible for PoDoCo foundation pool and management of PoDoCo program. PoDoCo management group consist of representatives of each member foundation, chair of PoDoCo Management Group is Yrjö Neuvo and Secretary Seppo Tikkanen.

DIMECC and PoDoCo program manager is responsible for daily operations of the program including identifying matches between industrial needs for strategic renewal and emerging scientific possibilities, program marketing and communication.