

Western Finland Cancer Centre (FICAN West): science and research strategy 2019-2022

The strategy for 2019-2022 is a part of the strategic planning of the future of the entire FICAN West aimed at securing effective and high-quality treatment, research and training in the field of oncology for the population in the region in a center of excellence.

Vision

FICAN West and its Scientific Cancer Board coordinate the cancer research in the FICAN West region and guarantee uninterrupted funding of high-quality cancer research. They secure rapid and effective adaptation of scientific research results into practice and innovations. FICAN West also unifies and develops collaboration in the field of education.

Values

FICAN West operates by these values:

- Values of the science and research strategy of the Turku University Hospital (Tyks): ethical, critical, patient/client centered, and clinically and socially efficient.
- Strategic values of the University of Turku: ethical, critical, creative, open-minded and societal.
- Strategic values of the FICAN West: patient oriented, equal admission to treatment and high-quality care, innovative and capable personnel, high-quality scientific research and comprehensive, innovative and international collaboration networks.

Working environment

The working environment of the FICAN West Cancer Centre covers the owners and key science actors in southwest Finland. The owners are the Hospital District of Southwest Finland (VSSHP), the Satakunta Hospital District (SATSHP), the Vaasa Hospital District (VSHP) and the University of Turku. The regional key research and science actors are located in the Health Campus Turku area: the Åbo Akademi University, the Turku University of Applied Sciences, the Novia University of Applied Sciences and the Turku Science Park. The FICAN West cancer centre houses a dedicated research laboratory on the 5th floor of the Medisiina D building. Research in this facility is carried out as a part of the wider working environment of the campus. The other important cancer-focused research laboratories are situated in the faculty of medicine and in the faculty of natural sciences and technology (this includes the Medicity laboratory and the PET center) and in the Turku Bioscience unit (special joint department of the University of Turku and the Åbo Akademi University).

The environment for pursuing advanced cancer research is excellent. With more than one hundred biotechnology companies, with the first biobank (Auria) in Finland, with the nationally leading center of nursing science and with two profiling research projects of the Academy of Finland (“Drug development and diagnostics” and “Bioimaging”), cancer research is targeted for success.

Strategic goals

The strategic goals of the FICAN West Cancer Centre overlap with those of the research activities of the working environment.

1) *High-quality scientific research*

- supports the strongholds of the working environment: 1) drug development and diagnostics, 2) bioimaging, 3) research into the molecular biology, genetics and immunology of cancer and 4) clinical drug and stem cell trials
- has established functional structures and enough material and human resources
- funding is secured and has an established financial strategy which covers the topics and areas needing financing – public financing, foundations, international funding and research collaboration agreements
- has access to vast patient registry data and biobank material
- guaranteed by up-to-date assessment and follow-up of clinical research

2) *Improving research effectivity through networking*

- functions as the central coordinating unit and integrates cancer research within the FICAN West research environment
- guarantees that research collaboration with the projects undertaken by the Health Campus of Turku functions smoothly and effectively across administrative borders between universities, faculties and hospital districts
- guarantees that the infrastructure related to cancer research (e.g., Auria Biobank and the Turku Clinical Research Center) functions well
- guarantees smooth cooperation with the functions of the biotechnology business cluster within the region
- takes place with companies only through the FICAN research centre (one-stop-shop principle)
- guarantees continuity of research through training, clinical scientists’ positions and recruitment

3) *Promoting the application of new information*

- promotes within its working environment the transfer of information on cancer research outcomes from basic research to the clinic by communicating and by arranging joint meetings

- manages the introduction of new procedures and quality assessments in the domains of cancer prevention, diagnostics, treatment and rehabilitation, new drug treatments, new diagnostic methods, psychosocial support and patient instruction
 - strengthens the knowhow of the personnel and promotes a research-oriented atmosphere
 - guarantees patient involvement and adherence to research and development projects
- 4) *Promoting innovation*
- supports collaboration with the Health Campus of Turku and with its innovation ecosystem platforms
 - is strengthened by collaboration with companies and relies on the thematic entity of drug development and diagnostics within the University of Turku
- 5) *Making a national and international impact*
- on the national level, this is done through collaboration within the FICAN (national and regional cancer centers)
 - collaboration is pursued with cancer organizations and patient organizations
 - acts as a member of the European cancer network OEIC (Organization of European Cancer Institutes), the European reference network on rare adult cancers (ERN EURACAN) and the European reference network on pediatric oncology (ERN PAEDCAN)
 - extensive activity (e.g., memberships and specialist assignments) within national and international research teams and teams working to improve and develop cancer treatment
- 6) *Promoting assessment of research effectiveness*
- the research strategy is assessed as a part of the overriding science and research strategy, center-of-excellence-strategy and accreditation by the OEIC
- 7) *Dissemination of research information*
- consists of national and international activity and is part of the overriding strategy of the FICAN
 - is presented in plain language for stakeholders and interest groups