

# **THL Biobank Application Portal: Manual for Applicants**

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## 1. Introduction

THL Biobank administrates more than 20 high-quality sample collections and data sets. THL Biobank Application Portal, developed by CSC, is REMS2 (Resource Entitlement Management System, version 2), an electronic system for handling access requests to THL Biobank's sample collections and specific data sets. The REMS2 Application Portal has been in use since June 2020. This document provides instructions on how to apply for access to THL Biobank's collections using THL Biobank Application Portal.

### The application process includes the following steps:

1. Secure login using your own federated user ID.
2. Selection of sample collections or data sets needed for your study.
3. Inviting key research group members, such as PI(s) and main analysts to the application.
4. Accepting THL Biobank's General Terms of Access and Service Prices.
5. Filling in the application form, attaching supporting documents which relate to the application, and submitting the application.
6. Responding to questions/comments of THL Biobank regarding the application.
7. THL Biobank's access decision.

You will receive automatic e-mail messages from the Application Portal (rems (at) csc.fi) when the state of your application has changed or there are pending actions requiring your attention.

Please note that prior to getting access to the requested THL Biobank materials, a material transfer agreement (MTA) between THL Biobank and the recipient institute/s is executed (including execution of European Commission's standard contractual clauses when biobank material is accessed outside of EU/ETA). Once an application has been approved and all agreements signed, the recipient will obtain the agreed data set by appropriate secure data transfer method. The samples will be shipped as agreed.

Data from other registers about THL Biobank sample donors can be linked to samples/data obtained from the biobank. However, THL Biobank is not authorized to approve access to other register data and the linkage must be done by **separate application process/es**.

More information about accessing the biobank materials can be found at [THL Biobank's website](#). In case you need help or you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at admin.biobank (at) thl.fi. We are happy to assist you in your application process.

## 2. Preparing for application process

Before you sign in to THL Biobank Application Portal to fill in an application, it is advisable that you have all the information needed already available:

- A list of sample collections, to which you request access.
- Information about the phenotype data and the biological samples you request.
- Research plan as an appendix for the application.
- List of the e-mail addresses of all research group members. Each member is to be listed in the application and are encouraged to read and accept the terms of use to access the resources.

THL Biobank provides information on its sample collections and describes the available sample and datatypes on THL Biobank's [sample collection page](#) and in [KITE availability database](#). All other information concerning the application process and information on the questions/content of the application form are available at [THL Biobank's website](#).

## 3. Applying for samples and data in THL Biobank Application Portal

### 3.1. Access

You can access THL Biobank Application Portal at <https://thl-biobank.elixir-finland.org>.

 [Home](#) [Catalogue](#) [INFO](#) [Privacy Policy](#)



### Welcome to THL Biobank Application Portal

Log in and submit an application to access THL Biobank's samples and/or data.

Information on the sample collections, application process, terms of access as well as services and prices are available at [our webpages](#). Researchers who are not familiar with THL Biobank's sample collections are welcome to submit a preliminary query on sample and data availability using [THL Biobank Inquiry form](#).

Hands-on instructions for using the Application Portal are available at the [INFO](#) page of this portal.

For any additional information or estimation of the costs for your specific project, please contact THL Biobank at [admin.biobank \(at\) thl.fi](mailto:admin.biobank@thl.fi).

Please note, that you must use the same login method as previously to access your applications.

Login

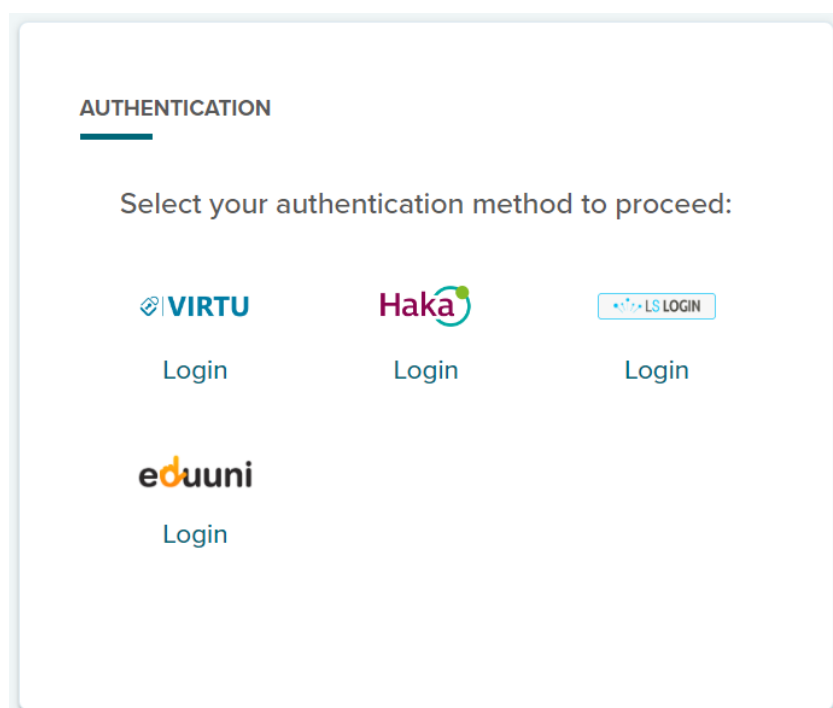
THL Biobank contact information: [admin.biobank \(at\) thl.fi](mailto:admin.biobank@thl.fi) – [www.thl.fi/biobank](http://www.thl.fi/biobank)

The information you can access from the Application Portal front page includes:

- The '**Home**' page includes links to THL Biobank's website and THL Biobank preliminary inquiry form.
- The '**Catalogue**' page presents the list of the research collections available in THL Biobank where the access can be applied via the portal. The functionalities for applying will become available once the user is logged into the Portal (see paragraph 3.4).
- The '**INFO**' page provides information about THL Biobank as well as links to THL Biobank Application Portal manuals.
- The '**Privacy Policy**' page provides information about the use of personal data at CSC.

### 3.2. Sign in

You can sign into the system using the green 'Login' button at the bottom of the 'Home' page. There are four options for signing in: Virtu, Haka, Life Science Login and Eduuni-ID.



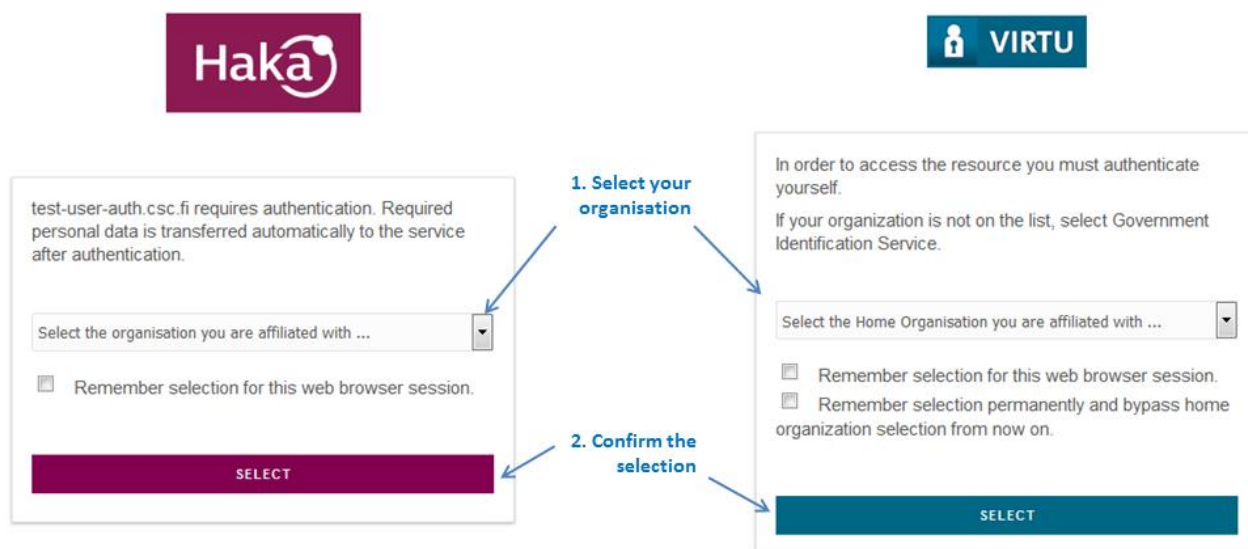
1. **Virtu** provides a single sign-on service for the Finnish government agencies and institutions.
2. **Haka** is the identity federation of the Finnish universities, polytechnics and research institutions.
3. **Life Science Login** is a new a comprehensive and extended Authentication and Authorization Infrastructure (AAI) combining the previous ELIXIR AAI with services provided by other life science research infrastructures.

4. **Eduuni-ID** is Identity and Access Management based on the user's e-mail address. E-mail registered as an Eduuni-ID will be re-verified every year. Eduuni-ID registration requires your e-mail address, first and last name and your organisation's name. Trusted sign-in methods include:

- Organisation IDs if your organisation is a member of the Haka, Virtu or eduGAIN identity federation member or if the organisation is using Microsoft Office 365 (Azure AD) services.
- ORCID, B2ACCESS, MPASS or ELIXIR AAI -IDs.
- Google, Microsoft, LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter.

**NOTE! You must choose only one login method.** Once you have decided your login pathway and signed in for the first time, **always use the same login method in the future.**

Sign in using **Virtu** or **Haka** by typing in your organisation's name or selecting your institute from the drop-down menu. After selection, click 'Select'. After selecting your preferred organisation you are redirected to a login page where you can sign in using your home institute's credentials.



If your institute is not found in the Haka or Virtu list, you can also sign in using **Eduuni** portal by selecting your organisation from the drop-down menu. After selecting your preferred organisation you are redirected to a login page where you can sign in using your home institute's credentials. If your institute is not found among the Eduuni-ID authentication list, you can also sign in using e.g., Google, Microsoft, LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter account. If you don't have any such account, create an Eduuni-account by clicking 'Sign Up here' at the bottom of the screen.

# eduuni ID

## Sign In


The service you are accessing requires you to sign in. Select your sign in method from the following list. The sign in method will be saved to the browser's cookie.

Valitse kirjautumistapa - Select sign in method ← 1. Select your sign in method

Continue to Sign In ← 2. Confirm selection

New user? Sign Up here ← Create an account

You can also login with the new **Life Science Login**, which is a new authentication service provided as part of REMS service. Start by searching the institution name to find your Home Organization, Institution or University. Then login by using your institutional credentials.



Login with

Examples: University of Bologna, name@auti

Search the extended list of Identity Providers

\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

Login with Google

Login with Apple

Login with ORCID

Login with LS username

If you have any problems in logging in to REMS, please contact us at admin.biobank (at) thl.fi.

### 3.3. Settings

After signing in, your login information (name) as well as the 'Sign out' button appear at the upper right corner of the page. By clicking the username, the e-mail address used for notifications may be changed. All other information is received from your identity provider to the system.

## Catalogue

Access to the following resources can be applied for.

Apply for access rights by adding resources to the cart. Resources using the same application are bundled together in the cart.

### 3.4. Catalogue

#### 3.4.1. Apply for access

THL Biobank's sample collections ('Resources') are presented in the 'Catalogue' page as an item-based list. Collections are grouped into following categories:

1. Any THL Biobank sample collection
2. Population collections
3. Disease-specific collections
4. Other research collections
5. Other collections
6. Other data

Select the specific sample collections you wish to use in your research study from the 'Resource' list by adding them to the cart. If you wish to study all the collections or are unsure which collections include the requested material, you can choose 'Any THL Biobank sample collection'. If you select the latter, **do not select** any other collection from the 'Resource' list. From the 'More info' button you are directed to THL Biobank's sample collection page, from where you can find information about the specific cohort and available samples and data. You can use the 'Search' tool for searching collections by their name or collection type.



# Catalogue

Access to the following resources can be applied for.

## Apply for access

Apply for access rights by adding resources to the cart. Resources using the same application are bundled together in the cart.

🛒 0 resources in the cart

Search collections by name or collection type

Search

Resource ↑		
1. Any THL Biobank sample collection	More information about the sample collection	<div style="display: flex; gap: 10px;"> <span>More info</span> <span>Add to cart</span> </div>
2. POPULATION COLLECTION: FinHealth 2017 Study		<div style="display: flex; gap: 10px;"> <span>More info</span> <span>Add to cart</span> </div>
2. POPULATION COLLECTION: Finnish Mobile Clinic Collections ("Autoklinikka")		<div style="display: flex; gap: 10px;"> <span>More info</span> <span>Add to cart</span> </div>
2. POPULATION COLLECTION: Health 2000 and 2011 Surveys		<div style="display: flex; gap: 10px;"> <span>More info</span> <span>Add to cart</span> </div>
2. POPULATION COLLECTION: National FINRISK Study 1992-2012		<div style="display: flex; gap: 10px;"> <span>More info</span> <span>Add to cart</span> </div>
3. DISEASE-SPECIFIC COLLECTION: Botnia Studies (diabetes)		<div style="display: flex; gap: 10px;"> <span>More info</span> <span>Add to cart</span> </div>

After you have selected the sample collections, they will appear in the cart. The list of selected sample collections can be modified, if necessary, by removing specific items at any stage of the application process. You can apply for population, disease-specific and other research collections with the same application form. **Different application forms are attached to the 'Other collections' and 'Other data' -categories, and each of them must be applied for separately.** Once you have selected the sample collections click 'Apply' to open the application form to complete your application.

### Apply for access

Apply for access rights by adding resources to the cart. Resources using the same application are bundled together in the cart.

🛒 4 resources in the cart

- 2. POPULATION COLLECTION: National FINRISK Study 1992-2012
- 3. DISEASE-SPECIFIC COLLECTION: SUPER Study (psychotic illnesses)
- 4. OTHER RESEARCH COLLECTION: GeneRISK Study

---

- 5. OTHER COLLECTION: THL Biobank Imputation reference panel

Other collections must be applied each with a separate application

Collections can be removed from the cart

Make an application

Apply for 3 resources as a bundle

### 3.4.2. Continue application

If you have made a draft of an application, but have not finished it, the application will appear at the top of your 'Catalogue' page. You can continue editing or close the application by clicking 'View'.

### Catalogue

Access to the following resources can be applied for.

### Continue application

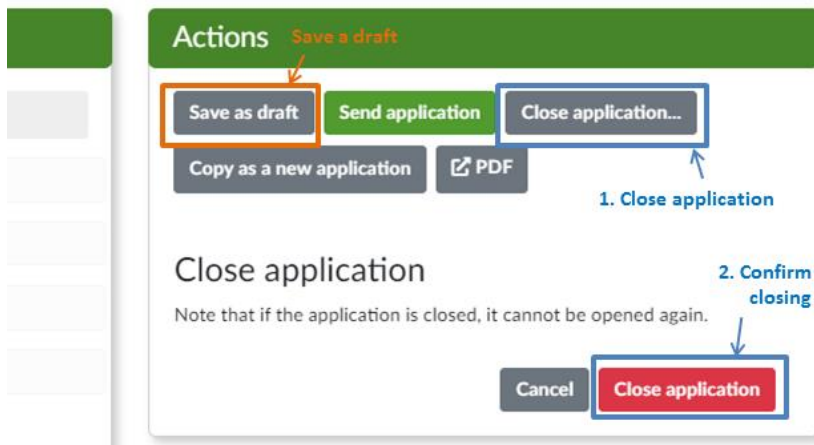
Unfinished applications:

Resource	Last activity ↓	
2. POPULATION COLLECTION: FinHealth 2017 Study, 2. POPULATION COLLECTION: Health 2000 and 2011 Surveys	2020-05-11 12:29	<span style="color: #0070c0; font-weight: bold;">View</span>

Edit or view application

### 3.5. Applications

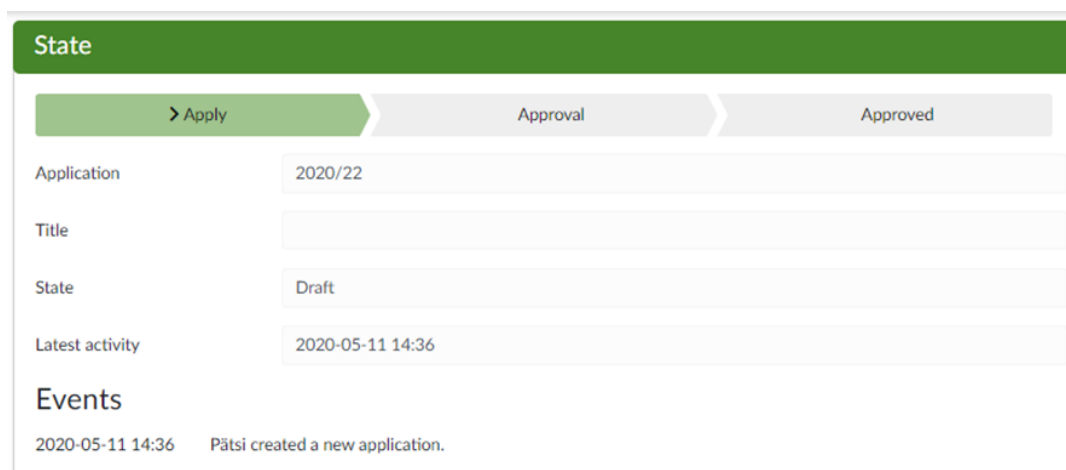
Once you have selected the sample collections and selected 'Apply', a new application window will open, and a draft will be created automatically. If filling the application takes time, it is advisable that you save a draft of the application by clicking 'Save as draft' button at the 'Actions' menu at the right side or at the bottom of the page. If you want to formally close the application, click 'Close application...' and verify this by clicking 'Close application'. Note that once you have closed an application, you can no longer edit and submit it. However, you can view the application and copy its' contents.



### 3.5.1. Filling in the application

You can fill in the application either in Finnish or in English. There are five different sections in the Application window: State, Applicants, Resources, Terms of use, and Application.

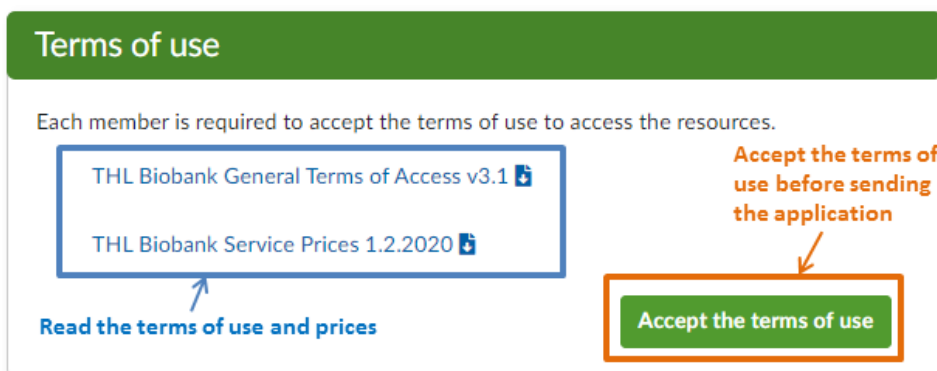
**State** – This section shows the name, title and the state of your application, as well as events concerning the application. Three latest events are readily visible, and you can see all events by selecting ‘Show more’ at the bottom of the section. The content of this section cannot be edited. When you have created an application, the State status is ‘Draft’ until submitted.



**Applicants** – Add to this section the information on all study group members who are actively involved in the study. To start adding the study group members, first click the grey box ‘Invite member’ on the right. Fill in the name and e-mail address of the member in the appearing fields. Invite additional members by clicking the green ‘Invite member’ box on the right, at bottom of the page and fill in details for invitation. New members will be invited via e-mail.

**Resources** – In this section you can add new collections or remove the existing ones from your application. If you want to edit the research collection list in your application, click the grey box 'Change resources...' in the upper right corner of the section. You can remove collections by clicking 'x' after the name of the collection. You can add more collections by selecting them from a drop-down menu that can be opened from the arrow at the end of the list. Note that only resources that can be applied with the same application form can be selected. When you have done all the desired changes, click the grey box 'Change resources' at the bottom of the section.

**Terms of use** – In this section the terms of use for accessing the applied resources are presented. As the applicant you are **required to read and accept** THL Biobank's Access Terms and acknowledge the service prices related to access before submitting the application. In addition, all group members are encouraged to read and accept the terms of use before accessing the resources. However, the application process can proceed even though not every member has accepted the Access Terms in the THL Biobank Application Portal. Read carefully both documents and accept the terms of use by clicking the green box 'Accept the terms of use' on the bottom of the section.

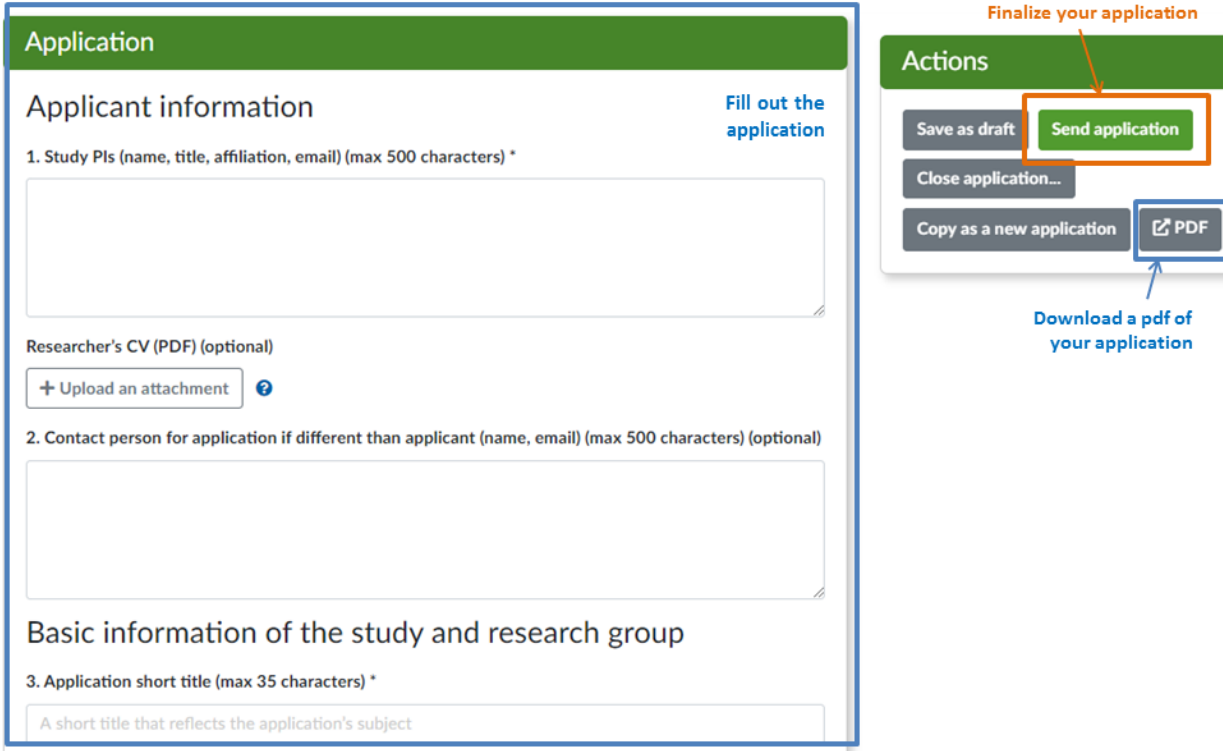


**Application** – This section contains the actual application form you must fill in. Mandatory fields and mandatory attachments in the form are marked with asterisk (\*). List of permitted formats for attachments is shown by clicking the blue question mark '?'. Please use the indicated format when possible. Please note that depending on the answer to a particular drop-down question you might be routed to answer more questions in the application form.

Please provide comprehensive information about your study in the application form to ease up the evaluation process. For example, if you request extensive phenotype data, please define requested variables accurately and use attachments when necessary. Note that all samples and/or data requested are to be related to the aims and hypothesis of the study. If you are applying for THL Biobank's samples and/or data for the first time, you are warmly encouraged to attach your CV to the application to provide insight of your scientific background to the reviewers. Regardless of the language you use to fill in the application, you should provide the public description of the project both in Finnish and in English when possible. If the applicant is unable to provide the public description in Finnish, the biobank has the right to translate it.

To finalize your application, click 'Send application' at the 'Actions' menu at the right side or at the bottom of the page. If your application is missing some mandatory information, or you have not accepted the terms of use, you will get a notification 'Submission failed' and an error checking list. When

the application has all the necessary information and is successfully submitted, you will get a notification 'Send application: Success'. A pdf of the application can be downloaded by clicking the grey box 'PDF' in 'Actions' menu at the right.



The screenshot displays the 'Application' form on the left and the 'Actions' menu on the right. The form is titled 'Application' and contains sections for 'Applicant information' and 'Basic information of the study and research group'. The 'Applicant information' section includes a text field for '1. Study PIs (name, title, affiliation, email) (max 500 characters) \*', an optional 'Researcher's CV (PDF) (optional)' upload button, and another text field for '2. Contact person for application if different than applicant (name, email) (max 500 characters) (optional)'. The 'Basic information of the study and research group' section includes a text field for '3. Application short title (max 35 characters) \*' with a placeholder 'A short title that reflects the application's subject'. The 'Actions' menu on the right contains buttons for 'Save as draft', 'Send application' (highlighted with an orange box and an arrow pointing to it from the text 'Finalize your application'), 'Close application...', 'Copy as a new application', and a 'PDF' button (highlighted with a blue box and an arrow pointing to it from the text 'Download a pdf of your application').

You will be notified by e-mail about questions, comments, pending actions and final decision concerning your application. In addition, the information will appear in the section State in the Application page while viewing an existing application.

### 3.5.2. Monitoring the status of an existing application

When you have successfully submitted the application, the state of the application changes to 'Applied' and you can view it in the 'Applications' page. This view shows the application ID, the title, the selected resources, and the state and the dates concerning the application (created, sent and last activity). In the 'Last activity' field you can see the latest date when someone has processed the application.

By using the 'Search' field on the top of the 'Applications' page you can search an application by its ID, title, resource or date. By clicking the blue question mark at the end of the Search field '?', you are provided help for the search words. You can also sort applications by any field.

## Applications

Search

Id	Title	Resource	State	Created ↓	Sent	Last activity	
2020/22	Psykiatriset sairaudet	3. DISEASE-SPECIFIC COLLECTION: THL Psychiatric Family Collections, 3. DISEASE-SPECIFIC COLLECTION: SUPER Study (psychotic illnesses)	Applied	2020-05-11 14:36	2020-05-19 10:45	2020-05-19 10:45	<a href="#">View</a>

When the state of the application is shown in bold text in the 'Applications' page, you can edit your application. The application can be edited when its state is 'Draft' or when it has been returned to you for modifications ('Returned'-state). If you have created an application but closed it, it will appear in the 'Applications' page as a 'Closed' application. When your application has received the final decision, the state will change to 'Approved' or 'Rejected'.

Id	Title	Resource	State	Created	Sent ↓	Last activity	
2020/25	Psykiatriset sairaudet	3. DISEASE-SPECIFIC COLLECTION: THL Psychiatric Family Collections, 3. DISEASE-SPECIFIC COLLECTION: SUPER Study (psychotic illnesses)	Rejected	2020-05-22 13:32	2020-05-26 11:58	2020-05-28 09:53	<a href="#">View</a>
2020/22	Psykiatriset sairaudet	3. DISEASE-SPECIFIC COLLECTION: THL Psychiatric Family Collections, 3. DISEASE-SPECIFIC COLLECTION: SUPER Study (psychotic illnesses)	<b>Returned</b>	2020-05-11 14:36	2020-05-19 10:45	2020-05-22 13:07	<a href="#">View</a>
2020/6	test	2. POPULATION COLLECTION: FinHealth 2017 Study, 2. POPULATION COLLECTION: Health 2000 and 2011 Surveys	Approved	2020-04-28 14:09	2020-04-28 14:34	2020-04-28 15:19	<a href="#">View</a>
2020/18		1. Any THL Biobank sample collection	Closed	2020-05-07 16:06		2020-05-11 11:05	<a href="#">View</a>
2020/26		1. Any THL Biobank sample collection	<b>Draft</b>	2020-05-26 11:50		2020-05-28 11:54	<a href="#">View</a>

### 3.5.3. Editing and resubmitting the application

When the state of your application has changed to 'Returned' you are expected to make changes to your application. You will also receive an e-mail concerning this. To modify the application, click the green box 'View' in the 'Applications' page.

## Applications

Search

You are expected to do changes to your application

Edit the application

Id	Title	Resource	State	Created ↓	Sent	Last activity	
2020/22	Psykiatriset sairaudet	3. DISEASE-SPECIFIC COLLECTION: THL Psychiatric Family Collections, 3. DISEASE-SPECIFIC COLLECTION: SUPER Study (psychotic illnesses)	<b>Returned</b>	2020-05-11 14:36	2020-05-19 10:45	2020-05-19 10:51	<a href="#">View</a>



The modification request is shown at the 'State' section of the Application page under the title 'Events'.  
The required changes are described in more detail in the Comment located below the request event.

**State**

> Apply
Approval
Approved

Application	2020/22
Title	Psykiatriset sairaudet
State	Returned
Latest activity	2020-05-19 10:45

### Events

2020-05-19 10:45	Sauramo requested changes to the application. Comment: palautetetaan hakijalle täydennettäväksi
2020-05-19 10:45	Pätsi submitted the application for review.
2020-05-19 10:45	Pätsi saved the application as a draft.
2020-05-19 10:45	Pätsi saved the application as a draft.
2020-05-19 10:44	Pätsi accepted the terms of use.
2020-05-19 10:44	Pätsi saved the application as a draft.
2020-05-14 15:07	Pätsi changed the resources. New resources: 3. DISEASE-SPECIFIC COLLECTION: THL Psychiatric Family Collections, 3. DISEASE-SPECIFIC COLLECTION: SUPER Study (psychotic illnesses).

In the 'Application' section you can modify the application fields and attachments according to the comments. When you have made changes to the application, a blue **'Show changes'** button appears to the end of the question title. By clicking it, you can see the changes you have made. New added text appears with green background and deleted text with red background. To hide the changes, click **'Hide changes'**.

**Application**

### Applicant information

1. Study PIs (name, title, affiliation, email) (max 500 characters) \* Hide changes

Pätsi, professor, Research Centre, professor@research.centre.com

Researcher's CV (PDF) (optional)

+ Upload an attachment

2. Contact person for application if different than applicant (name, email) (max 500 characters) (optional)

### Basic information of the study and research group

3. Application short title (max 35 characters) \* Show changes

Psychotic illnesses

4. Research project full title (max 400 characters) \* Hide changes

Psykiatriset sairaudet suomalaisilla, psychotic illnesses among Finnish adults



When you have made all the desired changes, click 'Send application' in the 'Actions' menu at the right or at the bottom of the page to finalize the resubmission of your application.

### 3.5.4. Submitting an amendment application

If you have requested samples and/or data from THL Biobank for a previous project and your research question expands, you can submit an amendment request for your application. The application and review process follows the same structure as with the original application. If you have some minor changes in your research, e.g. adding new researchers, you can inform about these changes via e-mail (admin.biobank (at) thl.fi). Additional information on the actions required in different changes during the project can be found in [THL Biobank's website](#).


Please note that the current REMS2 version has been in use since June 2020. If you have used the previous version of the application system REMS for your original application the information **will not be** retrieved from the previous system. Therefore, there are two options for making an amendment application:

1. If you are planning **an amendment to an application approved in the previous REMS system** (before June 2020), you must create a new application in REMS2. Please see instructions in paragraphs 3.4.1 and 3.5.1. In the application form, please indicate that this is an amendment to an application approved in the previous REMS system, enter the previous biobank project code, and upload the original approved application as an attachment (pdf) to the new application. In addition, briefly describe what is new in the amendment alongside the updated research plan. We are happy to help you in providing you a copy of the original approved application, if necessary (contact admin.biobank (at) thl.fi). Please remember to submit your amendment application by clicking '**Send application**' after filling in all relevant fields.

7. Is this an amendment of previous approved application? \*

8. The previous biobank project permit code/s (max 100 characters) \*

Original approved application (PDF) \*

+ Upload an attachment 

- If you are planning to make **an amendment to the application approved in the current THL Biobank Application Portal**, you should use the original application as the basis for making the amendment application. To do that, open the **'Applications' page**, find the appropriate application and click the green box **'View'** at the end of the study details.

## Applications

Search

Id	Title	Resource	State ↑	Created	Sent	Last activity	
2020/6	test	2. POPULATION COLLECTION: FinHealth 2017 Study, 2. POPULATION COLLECTION: Health 2000 and 2011 Surveys	Approved	2020-04-28 14:09	2020-04-28 14:34	2020-04-28 15:19	<b>View</b>

*Start to create a copied application* (arrow pointing to the View button)

In the **Application page**, click **'Copy as a new application'** box at the 'Actions' menu on the right. When you have successfully created a copy, the **'State'** section shows for the amendment also the biobank code of the previous application (in brackets) that the new one is based on.

### State

Apply → Approval → Approved

Application: 2020/24 (copied from 2020/22)

Title: Psykiatriset sairaudet

State: Draft

Latest activity: 2020-05-22 13:07

### Events

2020-05-22 13:07 Pätsi copied the application from an old application.  
Application 2020/22

### Actions

Save as draft Send application

Close application...

**Copy as a new application** PDF

All attachments (zip)

*Make a copy* (arrow pointing to the Copy as a new application button)

Make the necessary additions and changes to the new amendment application. In the application form, please indicate that this is an amendment for the application approved in this application system and briefly describe what is new in the amendment alongside the updated research plan. Please remember to submit your amendment application by clicking **'Send application'** after filling in all relevant fields.

7. Is this an amendment of previous approved application? \*

Yes, the application was approved in this application system

Please note, that you are expected to create the amendment application by opening the previous application and selecting "Copy as a new application" button from the 'Actions' menu.

#### **4. Thank you for your interest in THL Biobank!**

In case you need help or you have any questions or feedback, please do not hesitate to contact us at [admin.biobank \(at\) thl.fi](mailto:admin.biobank@thl.fi). We are happy to assist you in your application process.