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AMBIENTE E SALUTE

The Changing Funding Landscape: A Researcher's Perspective

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Introduction

Adapting to evolving priorities, scarce resources, and new opportunities

- Research drives innovation and public health solutions
- Funding is critical for discovery
- Increasing complexity of securing resources
- Researchers must adapt to shifting landscapes to stay competitive
- For climate change and health research, funding volatility and political agendas shape priorities and timelines of grants.



Trends Reshaping Funding

- Declining core public research budgets
- Rise of competitive project-based grants
- Mission-oriented and challenge-driven programmes
- EU-level and philanthropic/private funding sources
- Shorter funding cycles and stricter reporting requirements
- Inconsistent support for climate-health research, influenced by political shifts and global negotiations
- Rise and fall of climate-health dedicated funds tied to COP outcomes



Implications for Researchers

- Higher administrative and compliance burdens
- Need for multidisciplinary & international consortia
- Greater alignment with policy priorities and SDGs
- Proposal-writing and networking more critical
- Instability for early-career researchers
- Climate-health researchers face rapidly changing calls and abrupt withdrawals of funding when priorities shift

Challenges from a Researcher's Viewpoint

- Fierce competition and low success rates
- Fragmented and short-term funding streams
- Balancing research time with grant-writing
- Equity gaps between institutions
- Pressure to demonstrate immediate impact
- Political negationism and polarisation, particularly in influential donor countries, hinder long-term commitments
- Risk of underfunding critical adaptation studies despite increasing climate-related health threats



Climate Change & Health Under Pressure

- Climate change is recognised as the greatest health threat of the 21st century, yet funding remains insufficient and fragmented
- Research areas most impacted: extreme-heat health impacts, vector-borne diseases, urban resilience, climate-related NCD burden
- Climate scepticism/negationism undermines evidence-based funding decisions and weakens multilateral initiatives
- Shifts in US policy (e.g., withdrawal from Paris Agreement, twice, then from WHO) influence global funding streams and priorities



Opportunities Emerging

- New focus areas: climate-health, sustainability, One Health
- Cross-sectoral partnerships (academia, policy, industry, civil society)
- Open-science initiatives & collaborative grants
- Blended finance: public-private & philanthropic funding
- Recognition of implementation science and policy-relevant research
- Growing recognition of health co-benefits of climate action opens new funding avenues

Strategies for Navigating Change

- Diversify funding portfolio (local/national, EU, philanthropic, industry)
- Build strong interdisciplinary networks
- Align with national & EU strategic priorities
- Invest in grant-writing training & research management support
- Promote equity, inclusion, sustainability in proposals
- Enhance communication of impact to funders and stakeholders
- Advocate for consistent climate-health investment regardless of political cycles
- Form coalitions to counter misinformation and maintain evidence-based funding priorities



Closing & Call to Action

- Adaptability and partnerships are key to thriving
- Researchers should shape future funding agendas
- A resilient research community can flourish despite challenges



Thank you!



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