

Roles and tasks of Strategic Research Council members

Members of the Strategic Research Council (SRC) have a vantage point on the world of Finnish science and research impact. Involvement in the work of the SRC deepens the members' knowledge and expertise about Finnish research, education and innovation policy and offers them a unique opportunity to strengthen the preconditions for evidence-based policy.

The Strategic Research Council (SRC) is an elected decision-making body established within the Research Council of Finland tasked with making decisions on strategic research funding. The SRC was established in 2014 as part of a structural reform of Finnish government research institutes and research funding in order to strengthen competition-based research funding in support of societal policy and functions. The aim of the funding granted for strategic research is to find solutions to major societal challenges and problems.

The SRC consists of a chair and eight members appointed by the Finnish Government on the nomination of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Under the Finnish Act on the Academy of Finland (now the Research Council of Finland), the SRC members must be distinguished scientists and scientific experts representing end-users and beneficiaries of research. In addition, the members must have wide experience of change management within administration, business and industry, or research.

SRC tasks

The SRC has four statutory tasks:

1. to submit to the Government initiatives regarding key themes and priorities for strategic research
2. to design strategic research programmes based on the Government's decision on themes and priorities
3. to select the projects to be funded based on a review of societal relevance, impact and research quality
4. to monitor the funded projects and assess their impact.

The budget authority of the SRC comes to some 55 million euros annually.



Practical work

On average, the SRC convenes once a month. Most of the meetings are decision meetings. It also has various preparatory and planning meetings, particularly in connection with the preparation of theme proposals, the planning of new programmes, the guiding of impact activities within programmes and the review of applications. The tasks related to the review of applications and the funding decisions also require independent work outside the meetings. On average, SRC duties take up about one day of members' weekly working hours. The Research Council of Finland's division of strategic research is available for assistance with all aspects of SRC duties. Expert officials are at hand to support the SRC, for instance, by organising the review of applications and by preparing and presenting decisions.

The chair of the SRC also attends meetings of the Research Council of Finland's Board and research management group, and all SRC members may be asked to participate in sections of the Board or in preparatory groups for various funding calls.

Good governance as well as clear and transparent procedures are essential to ensure the Research Council of Finland delivers a fair, consistent and reliable operation. For this reason, members of the SRC are not granted research funding during their term. SRC funding will not be granted to a person who has participated in the planning of the concerned programme to an extent likely to give them a comparative advantage over other applicants. The Research Council of Finland observes the disqualification provisions of the Finnish Administrative Procedure Act in order to ensure the objectivity and impartiality of individuals exercising public authority. Members of the organisation's decision-making bodies may not be a party to or be present at proceedings if they are disqualified.

SRC members are paid a monthly remuneration as determined by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. In addition, travel expenses for attending meetings will be reimbursed.

The Research Council of Finland's administrative language is Finnish, but when necessary the working language of meetings is English.

More information about the funding for strategic research is available at www.strategicresearch.fi.