

THEME PROPOSALS AND CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITY: DRAFT FOR SRC 2020 PROGRAMMES

Draft versions to be discussed in public hearing on 28 May 2019. Strategic Research Council will take note of discussions and comments given in the public hearing and submits finished theme proposals and the cross-cutting priority to the Finnish Government in June 2019.

To be noted: Translations in English and Swedish are drafts that may still change. In case questions arise concerning the accuracy of the information presented in this translated version, please refer to the Finnish version.

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DEALING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE – THE HUMAN PERSPECTIVE

Draft 13 May 2019

The research theme looks for solutions to how people can make choices related to mitigating or adapting to climate change, and how society enables such choices in a sustainable and equal manner.

The impacts of climate change vary from individuals to communities and from the local to the global level. When individuals find it difficult to perceive the effects of their choices, it may lead to feelings of uncertainty and frustration. This makes it difficult to react to climate change and look for solutions in order to mitigate and to adapt to it. New practices are needed in order to manage the situation at varying levels of communities and the society, as well as the ability to prepare for an uncertain future. The theme also focuses on investigating the global fairness of the necessary measures.

Within the programme, research projects should find concrete means for supporting the various actors in society in their efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change through the resulting new information, technological innovations, solutions for the use of natural resources as well as novel operating models. In particular, research into individual-level decision-making and directing consumer behaviour is needed. Linking different levels and scales can be done for example through lifecycle assessments of consumption and systems analysis.

Mitigating and adapting to climate change require both short and long-term considerations and dealing with inter-generational impacts. In addition to mitigation and ensuring the controllability of processes, preparations should also be made in anticipation of worse than expected outcomes of climate actions and potential and consequent social disruptions.

INFORMATION LITERACY AND EVIDENCE-INFORMED DECISION-MAKING

Draft 13 May 2019

The theme looks for solutions to the critical, constructive use of information to support individual as well as societal decision-making and actions.

Knowledge creates a robust, constructive basis for dialogue between people, individuals' choices as well as decision-making in society. People need new ways of processing information. The increasing abundance and fragmentation of information challenge the skills and practices of filtering and adopting information. People may use information selectively and hold on to their opinions even though there were evidence-informed grounds for adjusting them. The accelerating technological development needs to be accompanied and supported by skills of information-processing, and understanding the various types of information. A key challenge for the link in-between research and decision-making is related to the reliability of scientific knowledge and the acceptability of its use. A key question is how this knowledge is accepted widely enough to serve as the legitimate basis of decision-making in society and the actions taken by individuals.

Society and individuals need novel ways of forming well-informed opinions and skills for processing information. Focal issues include the conditions and structures for adopting, disseminating and using information in all spheres of society, covering the various dimensions of human life as well as the relationship between people and the environment. Challenges often emerge at the local level, whereas solutions may call for a global viewpoint.

Solutions require processing the mutual relations of different types of information and their contents. In addition, research is needed into the ways and tools through which information and data are produced, presented and shaped. It is crucial that the solutions that are offered do not lead to the exclusion from knowledge or foster inequality.

PRIORITY: INCLUSIVE CO-CREATION

Draft 13 May 2019

The cross-cutting priority for the strategic research programmes of 2020 is inclusive co-creation in society. While the viewpoint of the two themes is fairly individual-centred, the intention with priority selection is to emphasise the fact that individuals always act as part of societies.

The commitment of researchers and their interaction partners to co-creation, a policy that takes account of different viewpoints in an inclusive manner, should be taken into consideration in all project activities starting from project planning and goal setting. It is essential in research and interaction to emphasise an open, interactive relationship with the surrounding society and its various actors in a broad-minded manner.