Multidisciplinarity in Funding Instruments at the Academy of Finland

Tiina Jokela
Senior Science Counsel, PhD
The Academy of Finland
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Public research funding in Finland

In addition: National Defence University, as part of the Finnish defence administration.
Academy funding in 2017, by instrument

The Academy of Finland is funding basic science in all research fields which enables promotion and funding of multidisciplinary research.

**Researcher-oriented funding**
€246.8m
- Academy Professors
- Academy Research Fellows
- Postdoctoral Researchers
- Research costs of the above researchers
- Academy Project funding
- Centres of Excellence

**Thematic funding**
€99.1m
- Academy Programmes and international cooperation
- ICT 2023 programme
- Strategic R&D funding

**Organisation-oriented funding**
€66.9m
- Funding for research infrastructures
- Funding to strengthen university research profiles

**Other targeted funding**
€28.6m
- International membership fees
- Researcher mobility
- Application review, Academy Programme coordination, development and maintenance of research funding information systems

**Others**
6.5%

**Organisation-oriented 15.2%**
**Thematic 22.5%**
**Researcher-oriented 55.9%**
**Others 6.5%**
Method to analyse multidisciplinarity in proposals

- **Algorithm** based analysis
- Analysis is based on research fields indicated by the applicant
- Proposal is monodisciplinary if only one research field is indicated
Thematic funding: Strategic research

Funding for long-term, programme-based research

Multidisciplinary, phenomenon-based research that spans several administrative domains

Forced multidisciplinarity: Project must consist of researchers from at least 3 different research fields and 2 different organisations

Object is to achieve both societal and scientific impact

Builds on dialogue between researchers and those who need research-based knowledge

Learn more about SRC programmes and the projects: www.aka.fi/src
Multidisciplinarity on 2017 SRC proposals: Changing Society and Active Citizenship
Multidisciplinarity on 2017 SRC proposals: Disruptive Technologies and Changing Institutions
Thematic funding: Academy Programmes

- Support the regeneration of Finnish science by providing funding for research into **specific themes**
- **Typical characteristics:**
  - Science-driven
  - **Multidisciplinary**
  - **Promote science renewal**
  - International
Multidisciplinarity on 2017 proposals for the Academy programme: Health from Science
The Academy programme: Computational Science

• The instrumental goal of interdisciplinarity in the program has been largely achieved
  - The funded research projects have successfully applied computational methods to understanding and solving complex problems in various domains of science and society, including domains that have not as yet fully exploited the advanced computing capabilities

• The added value of the programme was the multi- or interdisciplinarity and unlimited collaboration

• Enabled research spin-offs, changing of ideas and support from a wider international network of scientists

• Study executed by Dr. Huutoniemi as a part of programme evaluation 2018
Majority of bottom-up research proposals (n = 2357) on 2017 were multidisciplinary

On 2017 September call – researcher oriented bottom-up projects
  • 15 % of all bottom-up Academy project applications were monodisciplinary
  • 85 % was multidisciplinary
Questions raised by the data

- Effect on evaluation of proposals?
- Effect on criteria for expert panelist?
- Effect on decision making?
- Recognition of new openings?
- Applicants experience and feedback?
- Need for reflection!
Next steps

- Validate used algorithms
  - Is analysed multidisciplinarity in line with observed one in proposals
  - Compare results of algorithm based analysis with qualitative study
- Systemically follow development of multidisciplinarity on proposals in a yearly manner
- Recognise novel combinations of research fields implicated in proposals
  ➔ may indicate development of new research areas
Conclusions

• Data analysis showcases the change ongoing already today in science
  - Questions faced today request multidisciplinarity from bottom-up research
• Data analysis tool is needed to recognize the changing environment
• Wicked problems span several administrative domains / research fields
• Multi- and interdisciplinary research promote renewal of science
• International (non-thematic) initiatives for promoting interdisciplinary research
  - ERC Synergy Grant
  - NordForsk’s initiative: Nordic Programme for Interdisciplinary Research
Thank you!