

Research
strengthens
crisis
preparedness



RESILIENCE
Academy Programme



Research Council
of Finland

ISBN 978-951-715-957-9

Long-term and extensive research creates the capacity to tackle sudden crises

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of high-quality science and expertise to welfare and society. A strong research foundation, along with the utilisation capabilities based on it, will give us the readiness to respond quickly to future societal threats and crises that are currently still unknown. Research creates competence and the ability to respond to challenges, thus improving society's predictive capabilities and resilience, i.e. the ability to adapt to and cope with transition.

The Research Council of Finland has provided extensive funding for research related to pandemics and other crises and how to prepare for them. The [RESILIENCE](#) Academy Programme has provided funding to support research that focuses on developing vaccines and medicines, protecting society and anticipating crises and minimising impacts. The programme has allowed the RCF to support high-quality, innovative and effective research, promote national and international research collaboration and strengthen the societal impact of research in the field. A total of almost EUR 40 million has been granted. Additionally, the Strategic Research Council (SRC) has granted EUR 15 million to the Pandemics as a Societal Challenge ([PANDEMICS](#)) research programme, which addresses this theme.

Interaction creates impact

As per its [strategy](#), the RCF provides funding for responsible and bold research that benefits both Finland and the world. In addition to scientific

breakthroughs, a key research goal is to strengthen high-level expertise. The scientific results and expertise of the RESILIENCE programme have created a strong foundation for the broader societal impact of research, because research projects have also sought extensive and diverse interaction.

In 2020, the RCF granted special funding for crisis preparedness and security of supply research to 16 research projects. The Finnish Government allocated EUR 20 million for this purpose. The research projects that have submitted a final report are introduced in more detail in Appendix 1.

The final reports indicate that, over three years, these projects have collaborated with nearly two hundred different research partners (Figure 1). Almost half of them are new partners with whom no collaboration has taken place before the start of the research project in question. Most of the partners are foreign research organisations. However, in Finland, the public sector has been the most important partner.

Research projects have also reported on the interactions that were a part of the research work. Interaction means activities where knowledge and views on, for example, the research topic, the wording of the research question or the (preliminary) research results and their utilisation are exchanged. The other party is typically a stakeholder that is interested in the research content but lacks the interest, expertise or resources to carry out the research themselves. Crisis preparedness and security of supply projects have interacted with groups from approximately 140 different sectors over three years (Figure 2).

Scientific actors outside the research community are the most significant group with which researchers have interacted (Figure 3). Many projects have also actively sought to interact with policy makers.

Research collaboration (Figure 1)

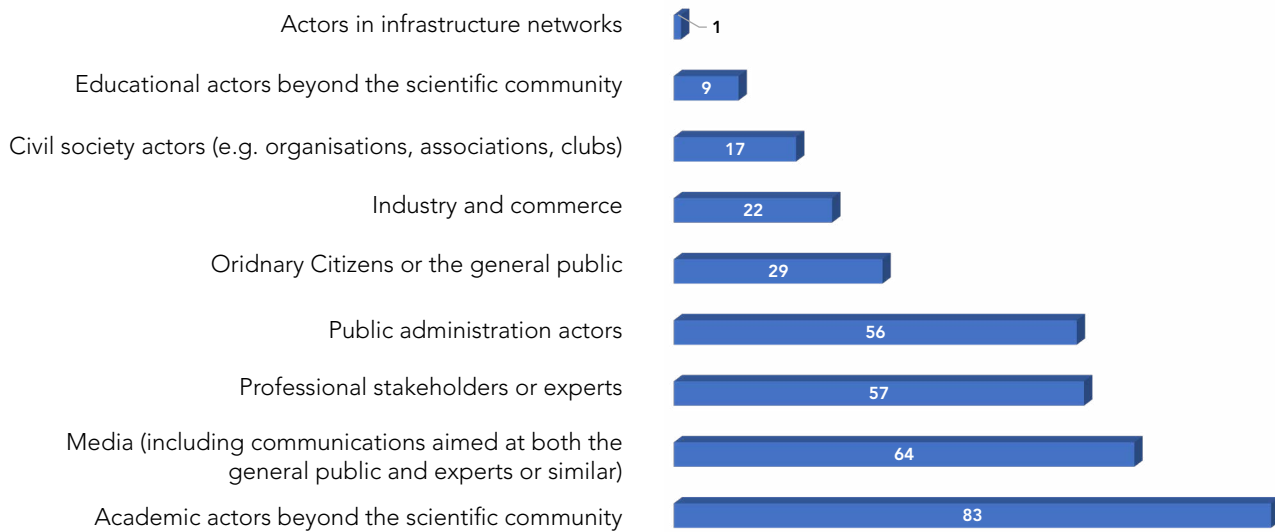
202 partners in total, of which 94 new



Source: final reports submitted to the Research Council of Finland by research projects

Interaction (Figure 2)

Reported interaction with different groups (140 separate interactions in total)



Researchers have attended parliamentary hearings and participated in expert work by ministries, Regional State Administrative Agencies and well-being services counties. They have also interacted with, for example, the Finnish Defence Forces and the National Emergency Supply Agency. There has also been interaction with NGOs, industry, the business sector and the media.

Collaboration is a key factor in strengthening the crises preparedness and security of supply

The crisis preparedness and security of supply projects funded by the RCF have examined a

variety of future scenarios and threats that society may experience (Image 4, project descriptions in Appendix 1). The research projects have shown that both the COVID-19 pandemic and other societal crises are multidimensional, affecting more than one agency, field of research or demographic group. Multidisciplinary collaboration and interaction between researchers and different societal actors is therefore crucial to guaranteeing crisis preparedness and security of supply.

The importance of collaboration is also highlighted in a report released by the [PANDEMICS](#) programme funded by the Strategic Research Council. The objective of the report is to provide researched information for societal needs and decision-making.

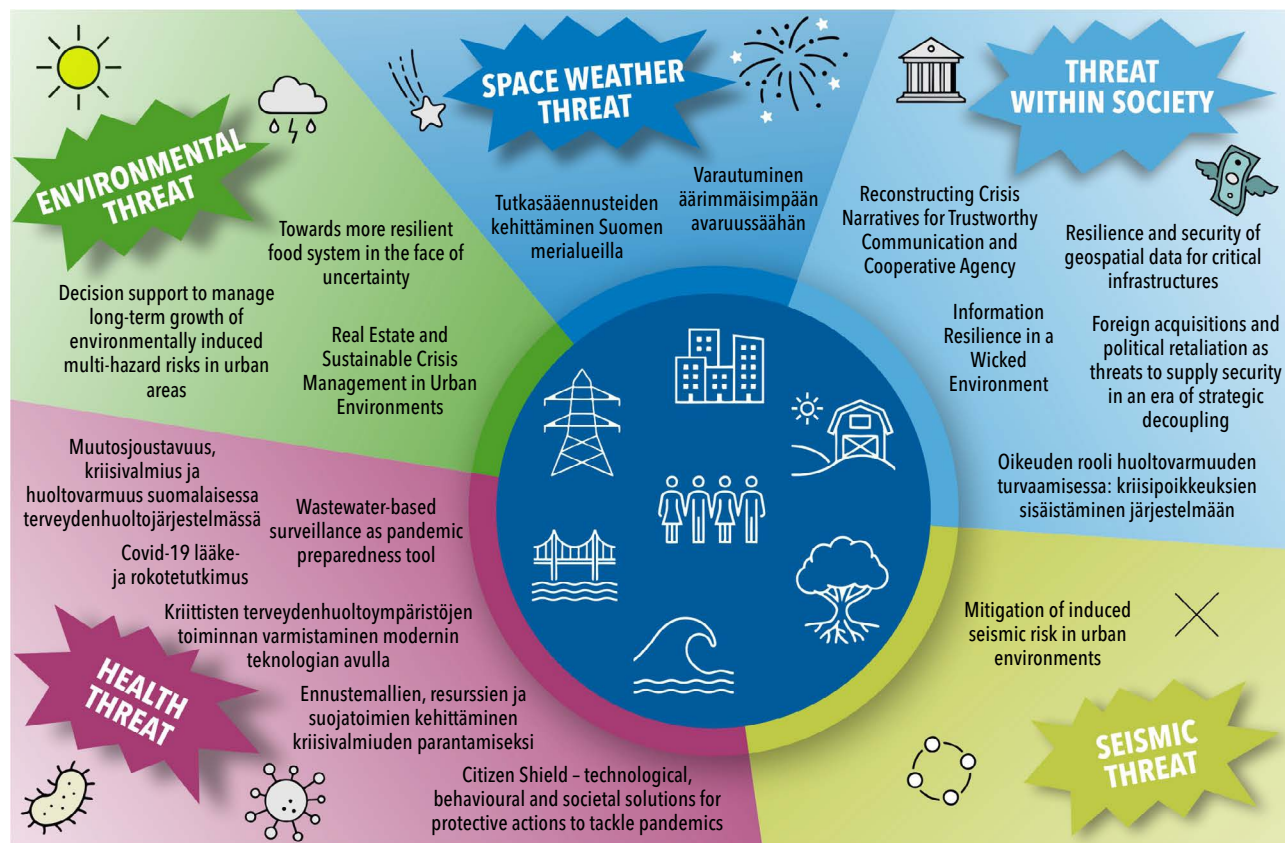
Scientific actors outside one's own research community (Figure 3)



The RCF has also promoted research collaboration aimed at strengthening crisis preparedness by initiating the [Nordic Welfare among Children and Young People in the Post-Pandemic Nordics](#) joint programme. The programme is managed by [NordForsk](#), a research body under the [Nordic](#)

[Council of Ministers](#). All these measures will also create a strong foundation of researched information for the Finnish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2025. The theme of the Presidency, as chosen by the Government, is Nordic public security, preparedness and children and young people.

Future scenarios and threats that society may face that have been studied in the projects on crises preparedness and security of supply. The research projects are described in Finnish in the appendix. (figure 4)



Appendix

- [Researched crisis information – research projects funded by the Research Council of Finland through the special funding application process for crisis preparedness and security of supply research](#) (report available only in Finnish)

References (Finnish only):

1. [Special funding related to the Covid-19 pandemic and limiting its effects – spring 2021 research project status update](#)
2. [Special funding for Covid-19 vaccines and pharmaceutical development – research project status update for autumn 2021](#)
3. [Lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic: Towards better crisis preparedness and crisis management](#)

Previous blog posts on the topic:

- [Results of special Covid-19-themed funding: research strengthens capacity to face future crises](#)
- [How did the focus of Covid-19 research change from 2020 to 2021?](#)
- [Nordic collaboration seeks new research on effects of Covid-19 on children and young people's welfare](#)
- [How have Finnish researchers reacted to the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences?](#)