

## JPI CLIMATE

*First joint call 2013, call topic 1:*

### **Societal Transformation in the Face of Climate Change**

#### Conditions, barriers and visions for societal action

##### **Societal relevance and objectives of the call**

Climate change generates new challenges for European and global societies. Responding to these challenges involves complex processes of societal change and transformation towards a carbon-neutral, climate-proof and adaptive Europe, encompassing social, cultural, technological, political, economic, legal and value-based changes. The social sciences and humanities (SSH) are crucial to understanding these processes of change, in particular by framing the challenges of climate change and response strategies from a societal viewpoint. It is paramount to understand the goals, motivations and potential conflicts of interest as well as the processes involved to meet the challenges.

Addressing the social and human dimensions of climate change requires interdisciplinary research with contributions from a wide range of disciplines including, *sociology, anthropology, psychology, political science, human geography, planning, economics, philosophy, history, law, cultural and literature studies*.

Based on the mission of JPI CLIMATE, this call for research proposals aims to facilitate research activities in the European Research Area (ERA) that understand, inform and support societal transformations in the face of climate change and in the broader context of sustainable development in Europe and globally. The aim is to build capacities in the emerging field of SSH in climate change research, thereby contributing to international, European and national research and policy leadership for tackling the societal challenge of climate change.

This JPI CLIMATE call is based on the following strategic objectives:

**Enhancing international collaboration.** Many of the promoters and inhibitors of societal transformation are negotiated and framed in a diverse European context. The aim of this call is to increase transnational collaboration and overcome national fragmentation within the social sciences and humanities. Its aim is to enhance capacity of SSH researchers across Europe to assume an action-oriented perspective and make contributions of a high practical value for decision-making in civil societies, businesses, industries and governments in response to climate change.

**Fostering climate change research in SSH.** This call is a first step of a process to position the social sciences and humanities as an indispensable part of an integrated climate research landscape in the ERA. It aims to connect various national SSH communities in order to strengthen a European knowledge infrastructure that is capable of contributing to a fully integrated understanding of conditions, barriers and opportunities for societal transformation in the face of climate change.

**Strengthening the action perspective of SSH research.** This call invites proposals that are rooted in a clear understanding of the practical concerns of societal actors and that contribute to addressing those concerns and offering new ideas and management solutions for effective transformation of their practices. This needs to

be demonstrated by active involvement of partners from civil society, private and public sectors as partners for co-design of research questions and co-production of knowledge.

**Facilitating collaborative research projects.** The research consortium should consist of a minimum of three partners from three different countries. The individual projects do not need to cover the full range of topics included in this call and should instead demonstrate a clearly focused perspective within the scope of the call. They should connect to the existing research interests and activities of the project partners and display the potential to contribute to the strategic objectives outlined above. While the call particularly addresses researchers and research groups in the social sciences and humanities, interdisciplinary and collaboration with other disciplines are welcome where appropriate.

**Connecting research to real world concerns.** This call invites proposals that engage with real world challenges and acknowledge the interconnected nature of these challenges across multiple areas such as: water management, urban development, extreme events, development pathways, energy transition, transport, agriculture, food sovereignty and security, health, quality of life and wellbeing, and social welfare. Lessons learned from past societal transformations and comparative approaches across Europe can also be considered.

In order to address the societal concerns and challenges from an SSH perspective and respond to the international research demands, this call invites research proposals within and across the following themes.

**Theme 1. The normative and social justice dimensions of climate change**

**Theme 2. The role of knowledge and risk perception in climate related policies**

**Theme 3. The societal capacity and governance to respond to climate change**

**Theme 4. The role of economy and finance in societal transformation**

**Theme 5. Integrative studies on societal transformation, visions and pathways under climate change**

**Thematic areas of the call****Theme 1. The normative and social justice dimensions of climate change**

Research in this thematic area addresses issues of justice, equity, democracy, participation, legitimacy, welfare, quality of life as well as intergenerational climate policies and response measures. Special emphasis should be given to the questions of which groups in society are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, how the positive and negative impacts are distributed and how these groups are participating in and addressed by policy-making. Who is included and who is excluded in the design and benefits of climate mitigation and adaptation strategies? Research in this area can relate to topics such as access to water, food sovereignty and security, energy transitions and environmental quality (and their interrelationship) for different groups in society and how benefits and burdens are shared across different strata in society.

By addressing the normative and social justice dimensions of climate change research, this thematic area also contributes to understanding the role and the global responsibilities of Europe in a world of global change.

**Theme 2. The role of knowledge and risk perception in climate related policies**

Knowledge production and exchange between climate research arenas (such as the IPCC), media agents, NGOs, branch organisations, educational institutions and societal decision-makers is central for guiding and facilitating societal innovation and transformation processes. Research in this thematic area explores the extent to which the increased level and quality of climate science has an impact (or not) on policy, as well as the types of factors that contribute to this interface and their implications for organising climate science and science-policy interactions in the future.

Research in this thematic area is also invited to explore how the risk of climate change is perceived and coped with by different groups and in the interaction between these groups; how knowledge is produced, negotiated, interpreted and disseminated; and how these processes empower and/or impede societal decision-making that is aimed at addressing the challenges of climate change.

By understanding the role of knowledge and risk perception for robust decision-making, and the types of knowledge that are taken into account and why, research in this thematic area also contributes to conceptualising and identifying effective and user-oriented climate services and analyses the potential contributions of climate services to societal transformations.

**Theme 3. The societal capacity and governance to respond to climate change**

The prevailing mismatch between public awareness of anthropogenic triggers of climate change and the perpetuation and spread of carbon intensive modes of production and consumption illustrates the huge challenges Europe is facing in achieving its goal of sustainable development with a high quality of life. Research in this thematic area explores drivers and inhibitors of climate change mitigation and adaptation and the necessary initiatives from societal actors and governance systems at all levels that could lead to desired societal transformations. Moreover, there is a need to analyse and understand (inter)national, regional, local, and individual response capacities (e.g. in terms of resources, commitments, risk management, institutions, responsibilities and instruments, and behavioural change) in the face of climate change.

The transformation into low carbon, sustainable and resilient societies is unlikely to occur without regulatory frameworks and policy instruments that induce citizens, governments, businesses and NGOs to reconsider and alter their practices. Research in this thematic area analyses what constitutes the governance of societal

transformations in light of climate change, and what changes in modes of governance would be essential for transformative processes. Furthermore it is relevant to investigate what challenges climate change poses to European democracies and how democratic institutions can be used to lead Europe towards a low carbon, resilient and equitable society.

#### **Theme 4. The role of economy and finance in societal transformation**

Research in this thematic area explores how the current systems and various conceptions of the economy and finance can drive, constrain or block societal transformations towards a sustainable, carbon-neutral and climate-proof Europe. Identifying and analysing the effects of potentially incompatible societal (e.g. political, economic, cultural values) objectives and performance indicators (e.g., climate change impacts and GDP) can promote a better understanding of current challenges for policy-making in the face of climate change and help to reconcile incomplete economic and political performance indicators. This also involves better understanding the critical roles that business models and industry structures can play in shaping and facilitating potential societal transformations through their business practices and their influence upon consumer behaviour (e.g. by enabling connections between emergent energy "demand" and "supply").

Research in this thematic area also contributes to the understanding of the role that economy and finance play in climate change mitigation and adaptation, assesses the current state of international climate financing, explores what new forms of climate finance and economic incentives for low carbon economies are necessary and feasible, and conceptualises policy instruments that can make use of these incentives for sustainable societal responses to climate change.

#### **Theme 5. Integrative studies on societal transformation, visions and pathways under climate change**

Research in this thematic area contributes to the understanding of systemic and sustainable societal responses to climate change and creates synergies with all other themes in this call. The multiple drivers of climate change are connected to current global megatrends, socio-ecological challenges (e.g., demographics, urbanisation, resource depletion and biodiversity loss), major controversies (e.g., geopolitics, [de-]growth, equity, values, social mobilisation) and other co-drivers of societal transformation. How is society's ability to respond to climate change enabled or constrained by other social, ecological and political dynamics and what strategies are there to successfully deal with these interconnected dynamics?

In this thematic area, positive perspectives on sustainable, climate-friendly and climate-proof European societies are connected to plausible socio-economic scenarios for societal transformations in response to climate change. Scenarios and transformation processes are to be critically assessed based on integrated socio-ecological evaluation criteria from a European and a global perspective (e.g. social justice, welfare, quality of life) and in terms of what these scenarios entail, for whom and with what consequences.

Research in this thematic area integrates lessons learnt from past and ongoing societal transformations on different scales and in different sectors to develop insights about what makes changes happen and how different groups of change-agents create and raise awareness for grand societal challenges such as climate change.