

Call for Papers - RESER 2024 Conference on “Co-creating sustainable solutions for Future-proof Societies” hosted by VTT Technical Research Center of Finland.

Conference is organized 31st October – 2nd November, Helsinki Region, Finland

Transformative changes within the socio-technical system are imperative to tackle global challenges and foster sustainable growth for long-term well-being. Large-scale transformative changes necessitate shifts beyond individual product and service innovations. Essential for addressing societal transformations are fundamental shifts in innovation cultures, management and governance practices, and mindsets. These transformations pose new opportunities and challenges for service scholars to utilize and update their expertise for the creation of societal good. Future directions for developing solutions for future-proof societies emphasize the following:

- Multi-faceted Innovations: Solutions must encompass both technological advancements and service-based innovations, intertwined with broader social and systemic changes.
- Collaborative Engagement: Collaboration among diverse stakeholders from industry, the public sector, third-sector organizations, and citizens is paramount to harness synergies and address complex challenges effectively.
- Systemic Understanding: Developing and disseminating innovations requires a holistic understanding of the socio-technical system, encompassing dynamic interactions between companies, policymakers, and citizens.

Decision-making faces challenges due to the interconnectedness of sectors, necessitating a departure from traditional sectoral and industrial approaches. This calls for systemic governance approaches that integrate sustainability as a target into decision-making processes, requiring new approaches for value creation and related indicators to support transition effectively. Overall, by harnessing the power of innovation, creativity and collaboration, service providers and policymakers can create positive social and environmental impacts that benefit present and future generations. The service research society has a long history in developing models and solutions for the co-creation of innovations and value, and for managing emerging and intangible systemic changes. However, the application of this expertise to address grand challenges and socio-technical transitions has just begun. The time is right for service scholars to join forces for the advancement of these topics.

The RESER 2024 conference is a forum for the presentation and discussion of innovative studies on services to ensure the active development of service research. Scholars and practitioners of management, marketing, engineering, economics, sociology, geography, or any other discipline are invited to submit papers that explore and develop a multidisciplinary understanding of various service issues. Papers can include literature reviews, conceptual papers and empirical studies using qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. In line with the above, we organize the conference around the following six themes, but papers on related topics are also welcome.

- 1) *Future-oriented approaches in building sustainable society*: Foresight is a basis for giving a long-term direction and creating future-proof strategies, products, and services. Studies have shown that companies and organisations investing in strategic foresight find the decision-making environment less complex and are able to review their own organisations as part of broader development. The integration of scenario development activities with service design thinking is also an avenue for the creation of not only future-proof strategies but also services that actively shape a desirable future.

- 2) *Co-creation in societies and ecosystems as an engine for change*: Many societal challenges, such as climate change and urbanization, are multifaceted and require innovative solutions and services that go beyond traditional approaches. Co-creation approaches are becoming increasingly prevalent: ecosystems and networks reshape the landscape of service design, delivery, and value creation. Research may focus on understanding the dynamics of collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including industries, decision-makers, researchers, and citizens, and how co-creation processes can lead to the development of innovative service offerings and examine the structure, dynamics, and governance mechanisms of service ecosystems. Of interest here is also an enhanced understanding of how service co-creation can bridge the gap between top-down policy and bottom-up citizen engagement, fostering a sense of shared ownership for sustainable solutions.
- 3) *Smart cities and resilient infrastructures*: Cities have been considered potential 'drivers' and loci for sustainability, innovation, and societal progress. They have a dual role in solving and contributing to sustainability: cities generate both problems and solutions to sustainability challenges. Cities may play a proactive role in promoting sustainable policies and developing sustainable solutions. Studies may investigate how smart infrastructures, urban planning, smart mobility, and energy solutions can create resilient, interconnected service ecosystems within cities and regions, enhancing quality of life, sustainability, and economic vitality.
- 4) *Empowering citizens and communities*: Empowering individuals and communities to actively participate in problem-solving and decision-making processes may lead to more inclusive and democratic societies. By leveraging technology and collaborative platforms, service providers can engage stakeholders in co-designing and co-implementing solutions that address local needs and priorities. Additionally, there is a growing interest in social innovation and inclusive design approaches that address the needs of marginalized and underserved communities. Studies may investigate how service innovations can promote social inclusion, equity, and accessibility, as well as empower diverse stakeholders to participate in co-creation processes.
- 5) *Service innovation for a sustainable society (proposed by the RRI association- Research Network on Innovation)*: Service innovations have been argued to be critical for organizations' competitiveness but does not come without challenges. To be successful in the area involves continuous experimentation, adaptation, and learning to anticipate and respond to changing customer needs, market trends, and technological development. If successful, service innovations can be supportive of a sustainable society in more ways than by contributing to competitiveness and thereby economic sustainability. In terms of social sustainability an example is service innovations in healthcare supporting equal and accessible care, often enabled by digital solutions. Finally, regarding environmental sustainability service innovations enabling circular economy and supporting sharing economy are a few among many examples of support. We thus invite papers focusing on the development, delivery, or impact of service innovations on any dimension of sustainability, pointing to the potential role of service innovations in creating a future-proof society.
- 6) *Future directions in technological development*: Embracing technological advancement is crucial for future-proof societies to drive innovation, enhance productivity, and improve quality of life. Societal and economic development is increasingly dependent on technological knowledge and the ability to develop and efficiently use novel technologies. From the viewpoint of future-proof societies, the advancement of digital technologies, artificial intelligence and data analytics will also be central in the future. Making sense of data requires new, improved methods for communication between humans and machines, as well as the development of data management and data governance methods. It also requires adequate engagement with the ethical implications of data-driven services in order to explore how service design can promote responsible data collection, use, and ownership.

- 7) *Governance for sustainable solutions*: Future-proof societies and related innovations do not emerge without policy measures and governance structures that support their creation. In order to ensure the impact and value of the solutions and guarantee robust and real-time information in decision-making, we need to understand the role of policy frameworks, regulatory mechanisms, and governance structures in fostering sustainable solutions. Essence is in understanding how the value is co-created and what the long-term and systemic impacts of solutions are. To capture the comprehensive value of the solution and to offer versatile perspectives to decision-making, novel tools for evaluating, validating, and arguing the impact from the perspective of different stakeholders are required.

By exploring these topics, the conference aims to foster interdisciplinary dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge exchange among researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and industry leaders working towards building future-proof societies through service research.

Author guidelines

Submissions should be made by using the following format of Extended Abstract:

Extended abstract Template

Please submit your Extended Abstract of 6000 – 10000 characters (including spaces and except references) according to the RESER-Abstract-Template.doc

PhD students

PHD students can apply for the RESER founders award, for details go to: <https://reser.net/reser-founders-phd-award/>.

PhD students who apply for the RESER founders award are requested to submit a Full Paper. The Full Paper should not exceed c. 20 pages (including tables, notes, and references), and must be due according to the RESER-FullPaper-Template.doc

On Thursday morning (31th October), there will be a workshop for PhD students (please follow the updates on the conference web-sites for more information and registration).

Deadlines

Extended abstract submission deadline: 30/07/2024

Notification of acceptance: August 2024

Full paper submission deadline for the applicants of RESER Founders Award: 11th October 2024

Conference Fees

- Early bird until 1st September: 380€ (regular) 250€ (student)

- Regular after 1st September: 450€ (regular) 280€ (student)
- Participation in the virtual sessions for the PhD students not able to travel 150 € (student)

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Contact information

For further questions please contact RESER2024@vtt.fi