COST ACTION CA15137

State of the art in SSH research evaluation

Introduction

↗ This is a brief presentation of activities carried on so far in the three main work-groups of the COST Action CA 15137.

↗ Members of our Action publish on all the topics covered here, COST is about coordination of their various researches.

↗ A public bibliography, as well as other documents, will be available via our webpage (section downloads): http://enressh.eu/

↗ To date, we can recommend the following books covering various aspects of SSH research evaluation:

Benneworth, Paul, Gulbrandsen, Magnus, Hazelkorn, Ellen, The Impact and Future of Arts and Humanities Research, http://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9781137408983

Ochsner, Michael; Hug, Sven E.; Daniel, Hans-Dieter, Research Assessment in the Humanities. Towards Criteria and Procedures, http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007%2F978-3-319-29016-4

COST ACTION CA15137

I. Representations of research quality in the SSH

WG1

Michael Ochsner

WG1: Conceptual Frameworks

- ↗ Main objective:
  - ↗ Further understanding of knowledge production in the SSH
  - ↗ Link evaluation procedures to SSH knowledge production

- ↗ Main Issues
  - ↗ Scholars opposition to evaluation
  - ↗ Peer Review vs. Metrics
  - ↗ Internationality vs. local rootedness
  - ↗ Interdisciplinarity vs. disciplinary expertise

WG1: Conceptual Frameworks

Questions raised in SSH

↗ What is research quality in the SSH?

↗ What are criteria for research performance in SSH?

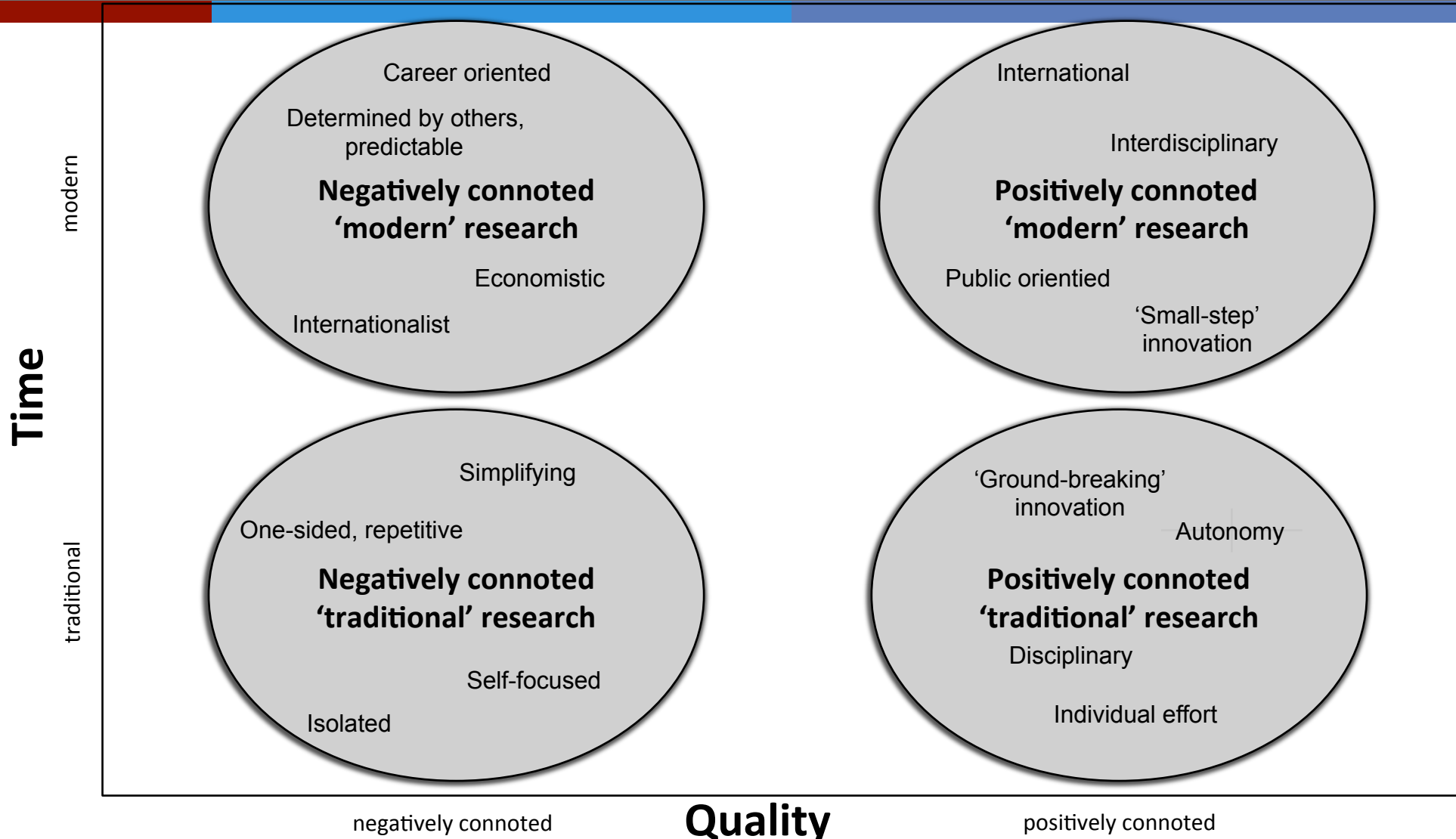↗ What are (expected) effects of evaluation in SSH?

What can we learn from the SSH?

↗ Aims of evaluation

↗ Recommendations

SSH scholars objections

- Methods originate from natural sciences

- Strong reservations against quantification (especially hermeneutic disciplines)

- Fear of negative steering effects

- Lacking consensus

What is Research Quality?

↗ orange: reaching consensus in all disciplines;
blue: reaching consensus in two disciplines

1. Scholarly exchange
2. Innovation, originality
3. Productivity
4. Rigour
5. Fostering cultural memory
6. Recognition
7. Reflection, criticism
8. Continuity, continuation

9. Impact on research community
10. Relation to and impact on society
11. Variety of research
12. Connection to other research
13. Openness ideas and persons
14. Self-management, independence

15. Scholarship, erudition
16. Passion, enthusiasm
17. Vision of future research
18. Connection between research and teaching, scholarship of teaching
19. Relevance

Measures of Research Performance

Table 1: Frequently used indicators and criteria they can potentially measure

Indicators	Criterion
Citations	Recognition; impact on research community; relevance
Prizes	Recognition; impact on research community; relevance
Third party funding	Recognition; impact on research community; relevance; relation to and impact on society
Collaborations	Scholarly exchange; recognition
Transfers to society and economy	Relation to and impact on society
Publications	Scholarly exchange; productivity
Board memberships	Scholarly exchange; recognition; impact on research community
Recruitment	Continuity, continuation

Measures of Research Performance

↗ What criteria are measured in evaluations?

↗ **bold and italic**: commonly used in evaluations

1. **Scholarly exchange**
2. Innovation, originality
3. **Productivity**
4. Rigour
5. Fostering cultural memory
6. **Recognition**
7. Reflection, criticism
8. **Continuity, continuation**

9. **Impact on research community**
10. **Relation to and impact on society**
11. Variety of research
12. Connection to other research
13. Openness ideas and persons
14. Self-management, independence

15. Scholarship, erudition
16. Passion, enthusiasm
17. Vision of future research
18. Connection between research and teaching, scholarship of teaching
19. **Relevance**

Measures of Research Performance

↗ Valid measures for research quality?
orange: three disc.; blue: two disc.; **bold and italic**: commonly used in evaluations

1. ***Scholarly exchange***
2. Innovation, originality
3. ***Productivity***
4. Rigour
5. Fostering cultural memory
6. ***Recognition***
7. Reflection, criticism
8. ***Continuity, continuation***

9. ***Impact on research community***
10. ***Relation to and impact on society***
11. Variety of research
12. Connection to other research
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15. Scholarship, erudition
16. Passion, enthusiasm
17. Vision of future research
18. Connection between research and teaching, scholarship of teaching
19. ***Relevance***

Further Complications

- Some SSH disciplines are linked to professions
  - Differences in quality criteria for research
  - Differences in usage also from the public → societal impact
  - E.g. Law Studies (Lienhard et al., 2016; van Gestel et al., 2012); Theology/Religious Studies (Mertens et al., 2016)

- Disciplinary differences with regard to criteria and evaluation (Czellar & Lanarès, 2013; Ochsner et al., 2013; Hug et al., 2013)
  - e.g. personal skills built through a career vs. methodological skills

- Different publication and knowledge production than STEM (Nederhof, 2006; Giménez-Toledo et al., 2016; Sivertsen, 2016)

- Impact of indicators → opportunity but also risk
  (de Rijcke & Rushford, 2015; Kaltenbrunner & de Rijcke, 2016; Monegon et al., 2016)

Questions Raised by SSH

- ↗ What is evaluation for?
  - ↗ What do we want to measure and why
  - ↗ What are the consequences
  - ↗ What kind of incentives do we want to give

- ↗ Societal Impact vs. Quality
  - ↗ Until recently, societal impact was dull (no worth publishing in the feuilleton or creating exhibitions)
  - ↗ Now, it's hip but mainly as economic impact (because of STEM dominance)
  - ↗ What if societally relevant but academically crap?

- ↗ What if society is wrong?
  - ↗ The danger of mainstreaming
  - ↗ Nobody was interested in Oriental Studies until 9/11 2001

What we can learn from SSH

↗ Know why and what: aim of the evaluation

   ↗ Different countries, different problems
     → different evaluation procedures

↗ Diversity

   ↗ Of disciplines, approaches, paradigms, time of reception, impact

↗ Critical thinking

   ↗ Applied to evaluation but also to demands of society and to priorities of ministries

↗ Validity of measures: Know what we want to measure

   ↗ Intelligent selection of indicators and measures, link to concept

Recommendations

- ↗ Bottom-up approach
  (quality: scholars; societal impact: all stakeholders)

- ↗ Research performance is even broader than quality:
  → Multidimensional concepts

- ↗ Adapt procedures to evaluation context
  → Aims, country, university (profiles), disciplines…

- ↗ Combine metrics with peer-review; sound measurement

- ↗ Focus on what you can do, not on what you cannot do
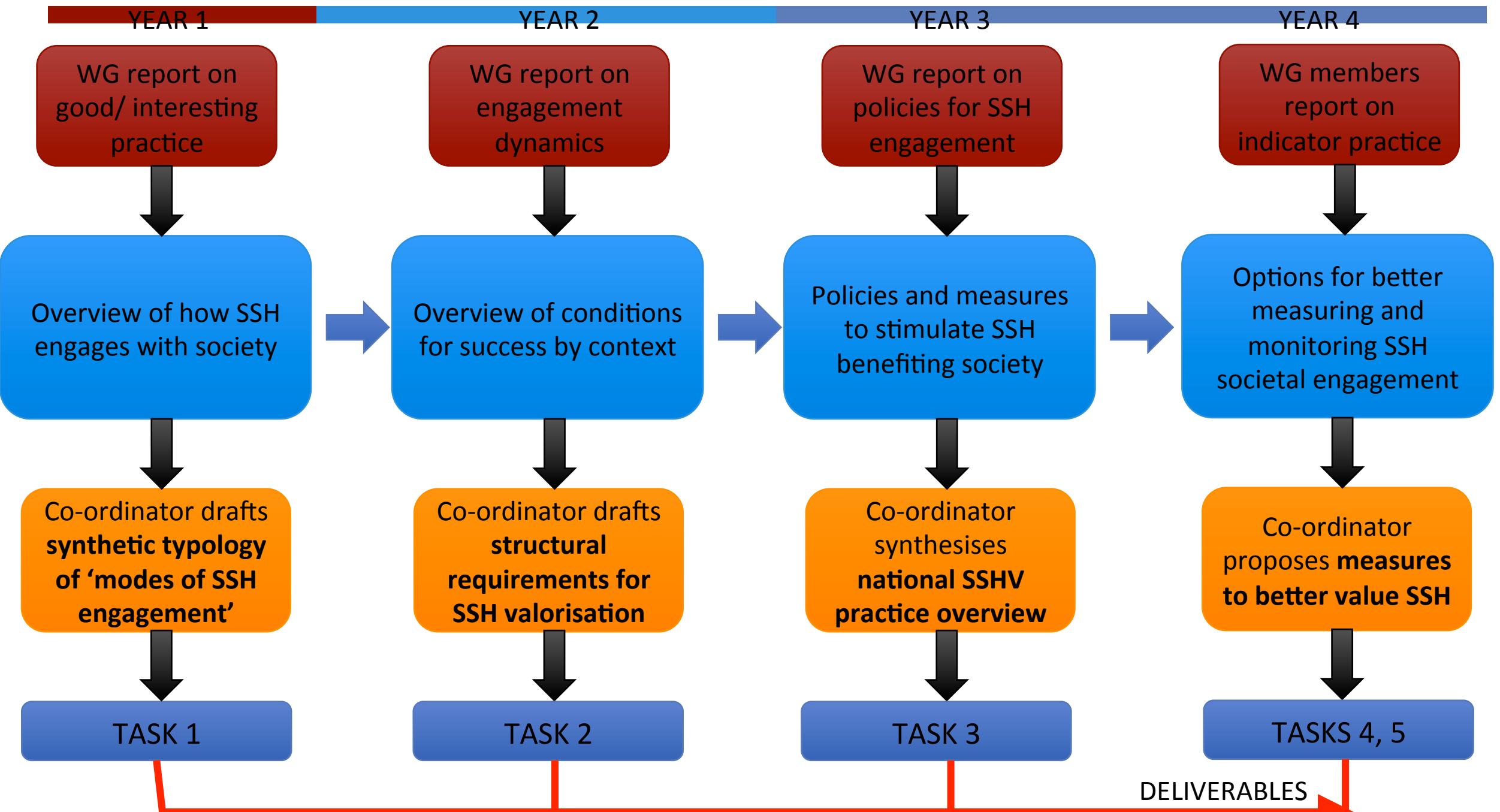 - ↗ Limit promises in/of evaluations, limit expectations, be cautious with interpretation

II. Societal impact and relevance of the SSH research

WG2

Reetta Muhonen, Julia Olmos Peñuela & Paul Benneworth

Data to develop a typology of the modes of SSH engagement
Grant period 1

↗ Successful impact cases, "fiches"

   Fiche= survey form which is internationally comparable

↗ Fiches are produced by members of WG2

↗ Total of 60 fiches at the moment

Meta-analysis

Countries (15)	Social sciences	Arts and Humanities	STEM
Finland, Norway, Iceland	public finance, administrative law, human geography	history, archeology, ethnology	medicine, chemistry
Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Switzerland, UK	sociology, political science, social work, criminology, educationl sciences, psychology	philosophy	
Croatia, Estonia, Slovakia	journalism, communication sciences, science studies, gender studies	linguistics, music	
Italy, Spain, Portugal	multidisciplinary research		

Meta-analysis

Type of knowledge	Idea originator/ orientation of research	Pathways	Beneficiaries
content, product,concept	academic, applied or both	policy	policy makers
method, technic		legislation	professionals, practioners
expertise		media, public engagement	citizens, NGOs
approach		epistemic training	business and industry,
theory			cultural industry

Aiming at the typology of social engagement modes of SSH - pathways of social impact

1. Expertise – researcher plays a role as an expert in the project commissioned outside university

2. Cocreation activities – researcher collaborates regularly with stakeholders

3. Research process by itself as an action of societal impact – targets of the study get recognition and sense of empowerment

4. Media and public engagement – results of research are taken into action by using society as a laboratory

Aiming at the typology of social engagement modes of SSH - pathways of social impact

5. Epistemic training – researcher gives lessons and produce training modules on the basis of new way of thinking the research they've conducted has brought up

6. Evaluation study – researcher produces quality checking tools, makes policy recommendations

7. Knowledge dissemination – policy makers, business and NGO representatives, citizens etc. become aware of the results of research through publications, social media, websites, databases, broadcasts etc.

Examples of fiches:
Philosophy professor Vetlesen (Norway)

Starting point: **two psychiatric reports with concflicting conclusions on the extent of the defendant's criminal responsibility** in the case against mass murderer Anders Breivik .

Impacts – policy and practice

➚ **Government established a committee and appointed Vetlesen to it.**

➚ **Vetlesen contributed significantly both to the report and to the ensuing debates**, making use of **Hegelian approach**.

➚ His essay "**Narratives of Evil**" was particularly relevant for the work of the committee.

➚ Committee concluded that influence should be moved from the domain of forensic psychiatrical competence to that of law.

Pathway to societal impact

Expertise – researcher plays a role as an expert in the project commissioned outside university

Examples of fiches:
Compensating the past – redress scheme for child abuse (Finland)

The research interest was to **identify the failures of Child welfare system in Finland** (1937-1983).

Impacts

↗ **Policy and practice** – development of practices
↗ **Moral dimension** – empowerment of the former clients of child care
↗ **Economic dimension** – changes in research funding allocations

Pathways to societal impact

Cocreation activities – research group or researcher collaborates regularly with stakeholders

Research process by itself as an action of societal impact – targets of the study get recognition and sense of empowerment

Examples of fiches
Quality control of tourist destinations (Croatia)

The main research interest was to develop **a research instrument which would serve as a practical tool for quality control of tourist supply value chain** in every type of tourist destination in Croatia.

Impact

↗ **Practice**

↗ The **results of the research served as the basis for annual competition** in quality of tourist destinations which was **broadcasted by Croatian National Radio-Television**.

↗ The research boosted Croatian enteprises to go for better quality of tourist attractions

Pathway to societal impact

Media and public engagement – results of research are taken into action by using society as a laboratory

Next steps

Question for you:

↗ Which kind of dimensions would be interesting from the view of policy makers as 'good' proof or evidence of SSH creating an impact?

↗ What are the societal responsibilities and challenges that SSH research should address?

Tasks for WG3

- Our **tasks** in the action are
    - 1: To compare publication patterns across countries and disciplines
    - 2: To analyse characteristics of dissemination channels
    - **3: To develop rules and procedures for databases**
    - **4: To design a roadmap for a European SSH research information system**
    - 5: To develop alternative metrics

- Milestone July 2017 (@RESSH 2017 conference in Antwerp) : overview of existing databases

What we did already

↗ Present situation on research information systems to each other during Poznan meeting July 2016: countries covered (or info available) included Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Belgium/Flanders, Finland, Greece, Latvia, Lituania, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Slovenia, and Swiss ➔ get to know (better) how systems in different countries work

↗ European survey on databases and repositories of social sciences and humanities research outputs (by Linda Sile)
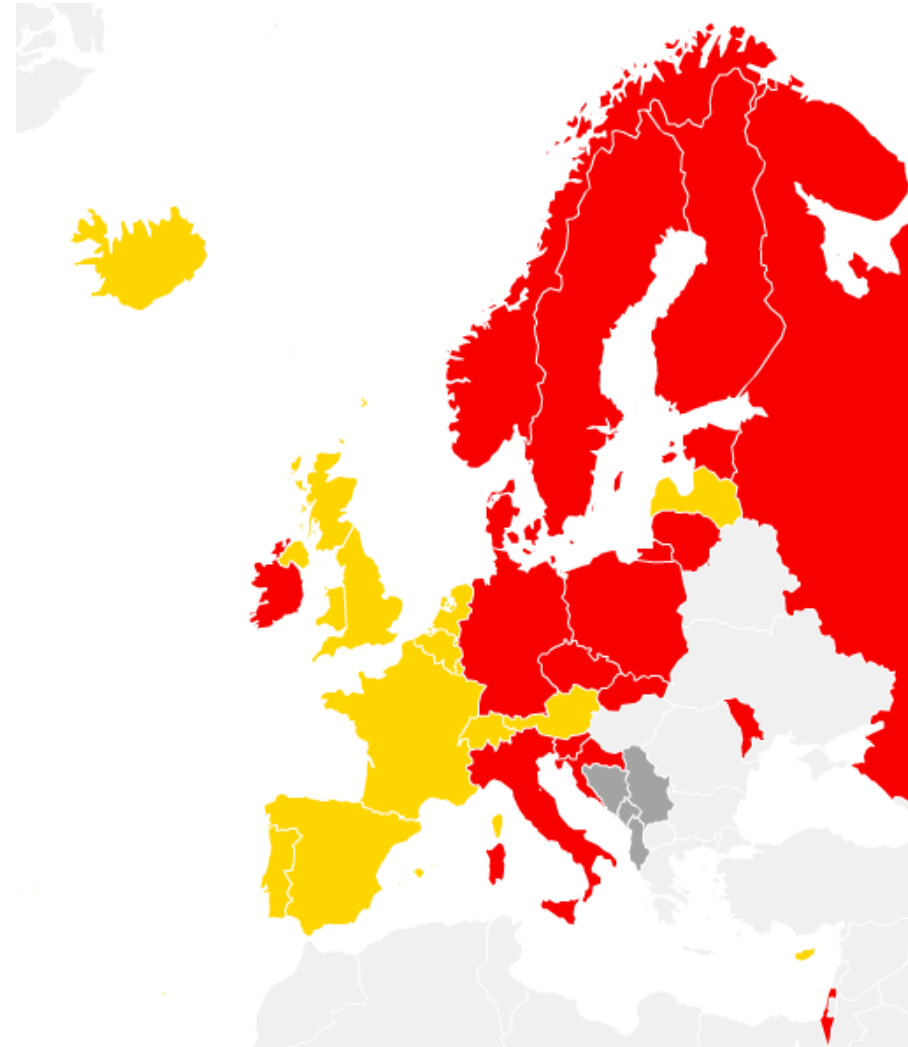
Results of survey so far

↗ Responses from 35 out of 41 countries

   ↗ 18 national databases

   (in red)

   ↗ Regional, multi-institutional, institutional databases in 16 countries

   (in yellow)

Map created with OpenHeatMap

Other ongoing work

- Bi- and multilateral comparisons, e.g. Finland – Norway – Flanders – Croatia – Poland

- Attempt at estimating the total European volume of SSH output

- Survey book evaluation processes throughout Europe (extension of Gimenez-Toledo et al, Scientometrics, 2016)