

Final meeting

Paris, France

17th of February 2020

1* Administrative issues , Applications

Grant Periods

Marek Hołowicki presented details on all Grant Periods of Cost Ca15137 ENRESSH actions.

The budget of Grant Period 4 is 183 988.50 EUR.

For Grant Period 4, we plan the following activities:

- 3 meetings: Amsterdam (8-9 of July), Valencia (17-18 of September), Paris (17-18 of February). - COMPLETED
- Training School (Poznań), 21-25 October. - COMPLETED
- 15 STSMs - 14/15 COMPLETED
- 4 ITC Conference Grants. - 2/2 COMPLETED

Administrative and financial status of the Action

In January 2020, we sent the the Intermediate Financial Report which was accepted by the COST Office and an installment was set to be transfered. Grant Manager asked for a quick response with travel reimbursement requests, because of upcoming the Final Financial Report. The Final Report is due within 1 month after the end of the Action i.e. before 06/05/2020.

Deliverables

Emanuel Kulczycki - the chair of CA15137 ENRESSH - presented the deliverables of all working groups.

WG leaders presented the outcomes of the most relevant results for SSH **research** community that can help them and enhance their visibility, improve the way SSH results are evaluated.

Third Training school organised by WG3 in Poznań (Poland) was summarized. During the 5 days in October 2019. 10 trainers and 32 trainees attended the event.

Janne Pölönen & Tim Engels from WG3 presented the recommendations for maintenance of publication channel lists.

Jon Holm & Corina Balaban presented and discussed the conclusion of ENRESSH publication.

Workgroup leaders presented the most relevant results for SSH policy community that can help them and enhance their visibility, improve the way SSH results are evaluated.

Dissemination matters

It was mentioned that RESSH conference will be organised in September 2020 in Poznań (Poland). The conference can be perceived as a great opportunity of disseminating the outcomes of the action.

COST action CA15137 was chosen as influential for stakeholders and policymakers. Therefore, the outcomes of the action will be presented on a workshop organised by the COST Association *COST Actions and Policy Impact* in April 3 in Brussels.

Jack Spaapen & Stefan de Jong presented the idea and described all steps of preparation of Evaluation Hackathon in Brussels.

Action's website and social media channels were also discussed, as well as maintaining them after the end of the action. The server and domain enressh.edu were extended to year 2022.

STSMs

Presentation of outcomes of STSMs performed by Elias Sanz-Casado, Jadranka Stojanovski, Eeva Savolainen and Marek Holowieki.

Future plans

Two submitted proposals were described. One is a CEF Telecom Call - Public Open Data and the other one is COST Innovators' Grant (CIG). According to the documentation of CIG, the project aims at enhancing the pace and success of breakthrough innovations, to build bridges between the scientific research performed in COST Actions and

marketable applications and to explore innovation potential. During one of the sessions the defense of the CIG application was prepared and performed.

During the parallel sessions workgroup leaders gave an update on projects. Work group 1 discussed the final remarks of the peer review report. The advancement of this deliverable was discussed. Report on evaluation systems was also presented and shortly discussed. Discussion also took place on the policy brief about better adapted criteria and procedures for research evaluation. Another discussed topic was another policy brief that is being prepared about career and evaluation.

18th of February 2020

On the second day of the meeting outcomes of all 4 grant periods were communicated to the stakeholders and policy-makers.

Mrs. Monica DIETL, Coordinator of “Plan Action Europe” at the French Ministry for Higher Education and Research opened the event.

Then, Emanuel Kulczycki - chair of the COST action CA15137 - presented how research evaluation is beneficial for society.

[Slides](#)

The first session was titled **ENRESSH toolbox for SSH policy community**, Jack Spaapen the vice chair of the action was the chair of the session

Evaluation as a tool to achieve policies

- Michael Ochsner: Aligning research evaluation with clear policy goals: risks and opportunities [Slides](#)
- Paul Benneworth: How to provide structures and incentives to foster impactful research [Slides](#)

Improving research information systems

- Linda Stle: National bibliographic databases for research evaluation: the knowns and the unknowns [Slides](#)
- Elea Gimenez-Toledo and Gunnar Sivertsen: ABP, the register of Academic Book Publishers [Slides](#)

Internationality and locality: Opposition or a winning team?

- Janne Pölönen: The Helsinki Initiative on Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication [Slides](#)
- Jon Holm: Peer Review, language, national and international communities [Slides](#)

Main messages for policy makers

- Jon Holm and Corina Balaban: The role of national evaluation systems in fostering better and more relevant SSH-research [Slides](#)

The second session was titled **ENRESSH tips for SSH research community**, Emanuel Kulczycki was the chair of the session

Evaluation and career

- Marc Vanholsbeeck: Early career investigators and evaluation in SSH: Opportunities and threats [Slides](#)
- Ginevra Peruginelli: Diversity of evaluation systems [Slides](#)

Evaluation and publication strategy

- Marc Vanholsbeeck: How to promote open science [Slides](#)
- Tim Engels and Emanuel Kulczycki: Diversity of publication patterns and its implications for evaluation [Slides](#)
- Julia Olmos Peñuela: Managing the tensions of rigour and relevance in output evaluation [Slides](#)

Role as evaluators

- Michael Ochsner: Identifying research quality [Slides](#)
- Raf Guns and Marek Hołowicki: Ambiguity, labelling and questionable practices in peer review [Slides](#)

Paul Benneworth - WG2 leader

The purpose of this brief note is to set out my thoughts regarding the progress that has been made in ENRESSH Working Group 2 looking at the issue of the societal impact of SSH research and in particular its effective evaluation.

The main contribution has been the facilitation of making a diagnosis of the nature of the problem, and the nature of the problem is quite simple, namely that research impact in society does not happen the way that it is useful to think about in the evaluation of those impact for policy purposes.

The starting point for thinking about the scientific progress that we have made has to be in terms of where the state-of-the-art was at the start of the action, and where we have move forward, and where we are also going to head into the future.

The starting point for the scientific state-of-the-art can properly be regarded as a triptych of projects that had taken place academically, and were not driven by the range of impact evaluation exercises already taking place at that time, most notably the REF in the UK, and the problems around the Excellence in Research in Australia.

As the issue of research impact had emerged onto the policy agenda in the 2000s, firstly as a goal of the system and then as something that had to be incorporated into evaluation, there were already some signs of resistance to it from an academic perspective, indicating the problematic nature of the problem.

What was particularly notable here was the opposition to the idea that impact should be exclusively understood in terms of commercialisation outcomes. There were two dimensions to this, that for some disciplines there were very few commercialisation transactions that could meaningfully be counted. But even for the STEM disciplines, commercialisation of whatever form, and even a focus on economy impacts, did not really count what mattered to these disciplines and the way that they created impact.

The state-of-the-art at the start of the project can be understood as a “Beyond commercialisation” conceptualisation of research impact. The ERIC, Siampi and HERAVALUE projects all attempted in their way to understand research impact and sketched out a process whereby academic knowledge intersected with societal users who then used that knowledges in various different ways that then expanded outwards (or not) thereby creating societal capacities (or not).

These models (or at least their common heuristic) seemed to suggest that the evaluation challenge was itself a relatively straightforward one in which there were pathways by which impact was created (interactions à networks à systems à structural change) and

that these could be evaluated in terms of their “goodness” however one chose to define that.

This suggested that the challenge for effective evaluation was in finding the correct objects to look at that would provide insights into these pathways. The pathways would form the basis for the evaluation, and even if one did not require conceptually those social change to be delivered, one could look at the initial interactions, and the ways that they created rippled in networks, as indicative of broader processes of change.

This in turn suggested a relatively straightforward research subject, the impact pathways, for which indicators could potentially be developed, in a way that allowed the impact to be understood in a way that was attributable to the science that lead to the changes, in a reasonable time scale, and allowed a distinction to be made between good and bad research impact being created.

That was the state-of-the-art, and what we have seen then outside is a number of projects that have proceeded on that basis, and that have, generally speaking, not succeeded in that operationalisation task. Although that pathway model seems to persist within a number of policy-maker imaginaries, there remains a hurdle in dealing with the tensions and contradictions that arise in the model when one stops to consider it.

And the main contribution that ENRESSH can say that it has made has been to destabilise this frame around the idea of an impact pathway with a defined start and an end, and instead to contextualise the idea of research impact as being something that takes place within dynamic knowledge communities. The corollary of this is that the best research evaluation systems and approaches are the ones that have allowed that characteristic to emerge, without necessarily that being conscious in the minds of those developing these new policy frameworks.

Science and society might seem like two very different worlds where very different rules apply, especially those academics and early career academics who find themselves caught on the horns of negotiating between those two communities. That was something that Agne was able to map out very thoroughly in her STSM. But those two different worlds only emerge through the act of those two worlds coming together.

The idea of the ivory tower academic who wants to take three years to do their research only emerges out of the confrontation with the societal world who is trying to solve a current problem urgently. And likewise, the frustration of the academic with the societal user who wants to debate their wise thinking and use it for totally unsuitable purposes is only a problem because the academic can feel that pressure

One of the ideas emerging from HERAVALUE was that there are some academic identities that can cope with the duality (Aristotle and Plato) and those that cannot. But what we in ENRESSH have done is to demonstrate that these tensions emerging are a sign of those tensions being resolved, giving an insight into the nature of the processes at hand.

There are science systems that are trying to create general, universal knowledge that is robust within the world of peer review. There are societal systems where actors are trying to do more of the things that they find good. **These two worlds come together around specific objects of study, and try to create a mutual benefit from working together temporarily for a period.**

Sometimes that might be quite explicit, where there is a formal partnership programme that runs for a period with scientists and societal partners working together in a co-creative way; but there can be other more informal relationships, relationships at a distance, where those processes run in parallel. Siampi advanced the idea of the productive relationship as a moment of interaction between those two systems, a moment of exchange.

What we have done in ENRESSH is to start to conceptualise and understand the ways those “moments of exchange” concatenate into advances, advances in the scientific system and advances in the societal system. These productive interactions are indicators of dynamic science systems, where knowledge processes are prosecuted by academics coupled to societal researchers for a temporary period resulting in advantages for both.

The very first of the steps taken in WG2 was the documentation of research impact pathways, and that emerged as Reetta’s paper, and what it demonstrates is the two sides of this system. Impact emerges in a process that is not just a relay race in which the knowledge is passed to societal users, but rather ongoing interactions with societal partners orchestrates over time to achieve a wider change. So Eirikur noted this by charting the ways in which humanities research creates a societal capacity in terms of addressing various kinds of injustice, be it hermeneuti or epistemic.

Creativity is important in this – both societal and academic partners see promising future pathways and they may come together and work together for a period to realise those. There is an ongoing process of interaction and attunement by which academic knowledge is steered to be useful and social knowledge is steered to be knowable by academics.

That suggests a need for a decentring of the research subject away from this impact pathway, to understanding the ways that these two systems operate and orchestrate together. Gunnar Sivertsen was able to demonstrate early on in the

project for example that this mutual orchestration is a “everyday value” of many researchers, particularly in the SSH, where they are working with, studying, social systems, and accessing those social systems in different ways requires them to have all of these kinds of interactions with societal partners in which positive interactions emerge, advancing the quality of the research being created.

This in turn raises the issue of social context as a critical one for the emergence of research impact, and the extent to which researchers in different kinds of context are able to create impact, something that came through very strongly in Stefan’s work. The model of dynamic science systems makes it clear what a problem it can be if that social element is absent, or worse, damaging to the scientific system; the interactions around impact are productive in that they both benefit the society but they also benefit the science in different kinds of ways. Those science systems where societal partners are not giving a strong boost to their researchers by contributing along these pathways are also undermining their strengths as science systems.

This approach helps to reframe the notion of the evaluation subject and where the lines should be drawn around that subject to allow for an effective evaluation. The framework allows a relatively neutral definition to emerge of research impact, that is in terms of the nature of the contribution that it makes in these dynamic science systems, creating knowledge in interaction with partners that forms the basis for future productive interactions.

The one project that we have probably subsumed within ENRESSH has the work that Jack and Ad have been doing around Quality Research Indicators in the Humanities, which is a very practical exercise but rooted in the difficulties of creating a sensible evaluation framework for the humanities. **What has emerged here is the idea of creating narratives of impact, the ways in which researchers are interacting with society, with lots of interactions having both influences on the direction the science takes and creating scientific outcomes.**

That chimes with Reetta’s model which shows how scientists can change their object of study; first is the Seize the Day approach, where something so big happens that it cannot be avoided by researchers. The Anticipating Anniversaries pathways is where scientists see a future window to gain publicity for their research and to change the way that the public think about a topic.

These different models may be present in parallel in different contexts: and what evaluation needs to do is to be able to reflect this creativity by academics, the ways that academics and societal partners interact and orchestrate their own activities to create these temporary mutual impact pathways.

Very early on in the ENRESSH process, but also outwith this framework, Claire Donovan very wisely argued that the research evaluation challenge was a theoretical one, and in particular, allowing theoretical frames to emerge without being unduly influenced by pragmatic policy constructs. **What we have been doing in terms of the working group is starting to put down some theoretical foundations for what should be the object of study in this.**

There was a community of Impact Evaluators that came together at the start of ENRESSH- that was identified very nicely by Marta in her Twente STSM, all wrestling with the challenges of research impact evaluation. She charts very neatly the idea that the notion of developing a “common definition” was seen by the community participants as a prerequisite for being able to progress.

What the rest of the working group has done is to demonstrate that any definition of impact that is able to carry these conceptual foundations is likely to be dissatisfying for policy-makers, because the conclusions that you would draw are at odds with the likely purposes of the evaluators in pursuing an evaluation. Issues such as acknowledging and encouraging existing activity and practice, encouraging contributions to collective outcomes, allowing for creativity and reactivity, are all at odds with the way that research evaluation typically demands that the research subject be constructed.

One corollary of this way of understanding is to do with the diversity of these individual pathways, being rooted in very different kinds of dynamics and activities. These need understanding in their own terms or risk imposing value judgements on the activities that might be at odds with the values of the activities being supported. Marc & Karolina have done great work in tracing out some of these tensions that emerge and the way that there are a varieties of prejudices about the territoriality of research encoded into research evaluation practices that are sometimes reproduced uncritically within theorisations that are too strongly driven by existing practices.

The other element about the emergence of the community is whether there is a new generation emerging in which the ideas of societal interaction are embraced. The CARES work is suggestive **that this new generation is emerging, in which the creation of societal impact is seen as being intrinsic to these ways of working, with all that entails (the limits and boundaries that this can impose).**

This has consequences for the ways that research evaluation works, this idea of the intrinsic take on impact generation, not just for early career researchers but for all researchers. At a time when there is an urge to celebrate excellence and reward the few the reality is that there are many researchers working in ways that have the potential to contribute to and support these mutual impact pathways.

A winner-takes-all approach might seem like applying the hard smack of Darwinism to scientific indolence but the real goal of maximising impact (if the desire is to increase societal impact). Instead, there is a need for evaluation to focus on these intrinsic motivations, not just evaluating to respond to existing motivations but also using research evaluation to shape the ways that the identity sets are formed that in turn create future impacts.

It is banal for a piece of academic writing to conclude by saying much more needs to be done, but at the same time, we are a network that came out of existing activities and will go back to other activities when ENRESSH concludes.

The final contributions we will make are being worked out in the WG 2 book, which we are busy finalising contractually in the closing session this afternoon, and we would like to see you all there.