

# WORKING ON IMPACT AND CONTRIBUTING TO RESEARCH & INNOVATION POLICIES – LOOKING BACK AND AHEAD

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DOI: 10.22163/fteval.2022.557

## ABSTRACT

This article presents impact case studies at research project and organisational levels by exploiting the Horizon Europe concept of pathways to impact and the proposed indicators. In Horizon Europe, which is the European Commission's funding programme for research and innovation, time-sensitive Key Impact Pathways and related indicators are used as a tool for assessing the different types of impact: scientific, societal, and economic.

Based on many years of experience with stakeholder engagement and impact, the authors focus on the indicators for assessing societal impact. In this way, the authors would like to contribute to the discussion on creating societal impact through research projects and institutional strategies. Leading questions are 1) Can Research & Innovation (R&I) policies be improved by using Horizon Europe Key Impact Pathways and related indicators? And 2) Can an institutional impact project and even a research project benefit from using Horizon Europe indicators and at the same time feed into R&I policies?

## WORKING ON IMPACT AND CONTRIBUTING TO R&I POLICIES – LOOKING BACK AND AHEAD

### 1. OBJECT AND PURPOSE

The main focus of this paper is on the new Key Impact Pathways (KIPs) and their related indicators used in Horizon Europe (HE<sup>1</sup>, see: European Commission, 2018a). The purpose is to explore whether the application of KIPs and their indicators can encourage the discussions on societal impact and can be used to assess pathways towards societal

impact created by a research project (first case study) as well as an institutional impact project (second case study) and, by doing this, feed into the discussions on R&I policies.

The HE Framework Programme (FP) has a stronger focus on impact than its predecessor, Horizon 2020 (H2020). By investing in areas that are of key strategic interest for Europe, HE frames and stresses how the impact of research and innovation can contribute to the implementation of the policy priorities of the European Union (EU) as well as to the achievement of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals.

The impact approach of HE

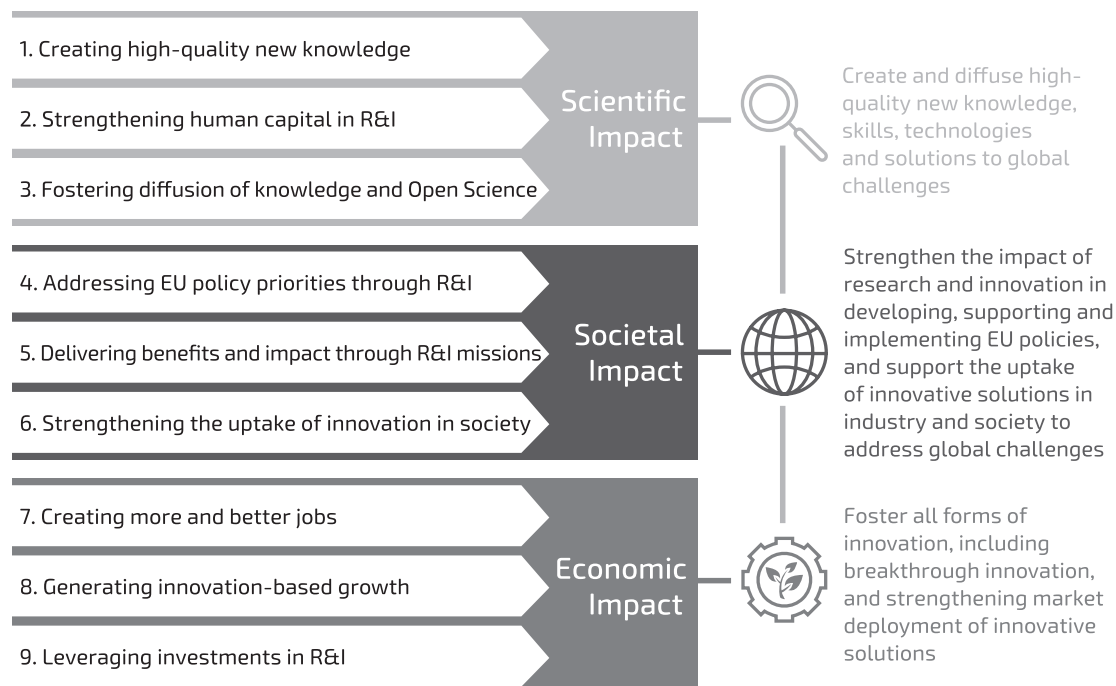
*“aligns with a new level of ambition to boost the diversity of impact of EU research and innovation funding. The objective is to allow policy makers and the wider public to get regular insights regarding the effects and benefits of the programme or European science, the economy and wider society.”<sup>2</sup>*

To monitor this approach, the European Commission (EC) has agreed on new KIPs, a concept that will also be used by the authors:

*“The HEU legislation includes an obligation to monitor the effectiveness of measures to improve citizen and civil society involvement. This is where the new Key Impact Pathways (KIPs) come in: In the HEU Impact Assessment, the EC identified nine KIPs for the future FP, which are subsumed in three categories – scientific, societal, and economic impacts. KIPs will replace the Horizon 2020 Key Performance Indicators (KPI). KIPs and related KIP indicators will structure the monitoring of the FP's progress towards its objectives. The KIPs, so the EC, stem from a need to better communicate this progress and to better demonstrate why EU R&I investments matter. Representing the ‘backbone of the HEU monitoring and evaluation’, the corresponding KIP indicators will unite both qualitative and quantitative information and will be reported on an annual basis.” (SwissCore 2020, p.18)*

1 Two acronyms are used for Horizon Europe: HEU or HE. The EC mostly uses HE, which will be the acronym used in this paper, except in quotations.  
2 European Commission (2021), webpage: Horizon Europe programme analysis, viewed February 16, 2022, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/support-policy-making/shaping-eu-research-and-innovation-policy/evaluation-impact-assessment-and-monitoring/horizon-europe\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/support-policy-making/shaping-eu-research-and-innovation-policy/evaluation-impact-assessment-and-monitoring/horizon-europe_en).

Figure 1: Three types of impact, tracked with KIPs (European Commission 2018a, p.104)



The KIPs set the frame for detailed indicators, which have been developed to address the specificity of the different actions that constitute the programme. The KIPs are time-sensitive, and the time aspects of ‘societal impact pathways indicators’ are shown in Figure 2:

Figure 2: Societal impact pathway indicators (European Commission, 2018b, page 16)

Towards societal impact	Short-term	Medium-term	Longer-term
<b>Addressing EU policy priorities through R&amp;I</b>	<u>Outputs</u> - Number and share of outputs aimed at addressing specific EU policy priorities	<u>Solutions</u> - Number and share of innovations and scientific results addressing specific EU policy priorities	<u>Benefits</u> - Aggregated estimated effects from use of FP-funded results, on tackling specific EU policy priorities, including contribution to the policy and law-making cycle
<b>Delivering benefits and impact through R&amp;I missions</b>	<u>R&amp;I mission outputs</u> - Outputs in specific R&I missions	<u>R&amp;I mission results</u> - Results in specific R&I missions	<u>R&amp;I mission targets met</u> - Targets achieved in specific R&I missions
<b>Strengthening the uptake of innovation in society</b>	<u>Co-creation</u> - Number and share of FP projects where EU citizens and end-users contribute to the co-creation of R&I content	<u>Engagement</u> - Number and share of FP beneficiary entities with citizen and end-users engagement mechanisms after FP project	<u>Societal R&amp;I uptake</u> Uptake and outreach of FP co-created scientific results and innovative solutions

To conceptualise and contribute to the discussion of societal impacts generated at the regional, national and EU levels, the authors present two case studies reflecting on the achievements of these projects and the time-sensitive KIP indicators. ‘Short-term’ captures the time during the implementation of the project and up to three years after the end of the project, ‘medium-term’ the period of three to five years after the end of the project and ‘longer-term’ relates to societal impact achieved more than five years after the end of the project.

## 2. CASE STUDIES OF WORKING WITH IMPACT

Policy makers, public research-funding bodies, like the EC and the Research Council of Norway, and private research-funding bodies, like the Danish independent foundation Novo Nordisk Foundation, have increased their focus and set their expectations for research institutions to demonstrate the immediate and long-term societal and economic impact of research. This has required, and still requires, a change in the way researchers, research managers and universities think about and understand the effects of research and how research is performed if they want to be competitive not only in securing research funding, but also in attracting students and staff.

The two case studies represent two very different ways of working on impact:

1. for the H2020 project, it was a prerequisite to work with measures which can lead to societal impact, and monitoring the possible impact has been one of the tasks for the project’s Impact Manager (Bettina Uhrig);
2. for the impact project at the university, one of the main objectives was to empower researchers to enhance the benefits of research for society.<sup>3</sup>

Both case studies are written by the authors of this article, the H2020 project’s Impact Manager and the initiator and adviser for the impact project at the university. The case studies are reports of measures which can contribute to achieving societal impact. The authors wrote these reports based on their experiences and tasks related to each project. The case studies illustrate the practical work with supporting pathways to impact. Pathways to impact are a concept used in HE and are defined as *“logical steps towards the achievement of the expected impacts of the project over time, beyond the duration of a project. A pathway begins with the projects’ results, to their dissemination, exploitation and communication, contributing to the expected outcomes in the*

*work programme topic, and ultimately to the wider scientific, economic and societal impacts of the work programme destination”.* (European Commission 2021c, page 29).

HE started in 2021 and evaluations of the programme are not yet available, therefore the authors cannot refer to such evaluations, instead they would like to contribute to a discussion of HE and its impact pathways. In doing so, the authors hope to contribute to the wider debate on understanding the impact of research relevant for policy (see: Williams and Lewis 2021).

### 2.1 THE H2020 PROJECT CASE STUDY: NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER GROUPS IN DARE<sup>4</sup>

The project Dialogue about Radicalisation and Equality (DARE)

*“aimed to deepen our understanding of radicalisation through a critical and societally focused approach. Funded under the EU Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, DARE investigated young people’s encounters with radical(ising) messages, how they responded to such calls, and the choices they made about the paths they took. The project undertook extensive empirical research with young people in radical(ising) milieus both offline and online and generated important insights into what drives radicalisation but also what constrains it. The findings suggest that the situated knowledge of actors in radical(ising) milieus might be utilised to prevent and counter extremism”<sup>5</sup>*

The call topic behind the project with the title ‘Contemporary radicalisation trends and their implications for Europe’ was part of the H2020 Work Programme 2016-2017 for Societal Challenge 6 ‘Europe in a changing world – Inclusive, innovative and reflecting societies’ and belonged to the call ‘Reversing inequalities’. In the topic description it was stated that *“radicalisation is on the rise”* and that *“research under this topic will considerably enhance the knowledge base on the scope, origins, causes and cognitive as well as emotional dynamics of radicalisation”* and will through its results impact on future policies preventing radicalisation, which was described as expected impact (European Commission 2017, page 36).

DARE, the only project funded under this topic, was implemented from May 2017 until October 2021, and coordinated by the University of Manchester. DARE comprised 17 organisations from 13 different countries<sup>6</sup> to secure the collaboration with stakeholders, which is seen as an important tool for pathways towards impact, the DARE consortium had agreed on establishing National Stakeholder Groups (Uhrig 2019/2020).

<sup>3</sup> The other objective was to remain competitive.

<sup>4</sup> This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no. 725349. The case study is based on discussions with DARE colleagues (see also Figure 4), internal impact reports and a public Deliverable written by the Impact Manager (Bettina Uhrig) for the DARE project. The Impact Manager was supported by the Impact Sub-Committee consisting of her, the Project Manager and two to three researchers involved in DARE.

<sup>5</sup> DARE, Introduction to the programme of the Research-Policy-Practice Event, 21 -23 September 2021, online, website no longer available.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.dare-h2020.org/>

Consortium Members: The University of Manchester, United Kingdom (Coordinator); Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway; École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, France; Anadolu University, Turkey; German Institute for Radicalization and Deradicalization Studies, Germany; Leiden University, The Netherlands; Hochschule Düsseldorf – University of Applied Sciences, Germany; Teesside University, United Kingdom; Collegium Civitas University, Poland; Panteion University of Social and Political Science of Athens, Greece; Higher School of Economics, Russia; The Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar, Croatia; European Network Against Racism, Belgium; The People for Change Foundation, Malta; Sfax University, Tunisia; University of Oslo, Norway; University of Birmingham, United Kingdom.

## NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER GROUPS – DESCRIPTION

The DARE consortium had agreed that National Stakeholder Groups (NSGs), consisting of a broad range of relevant policy-practitioner and scientific partners, should

*“meet regularly to:*

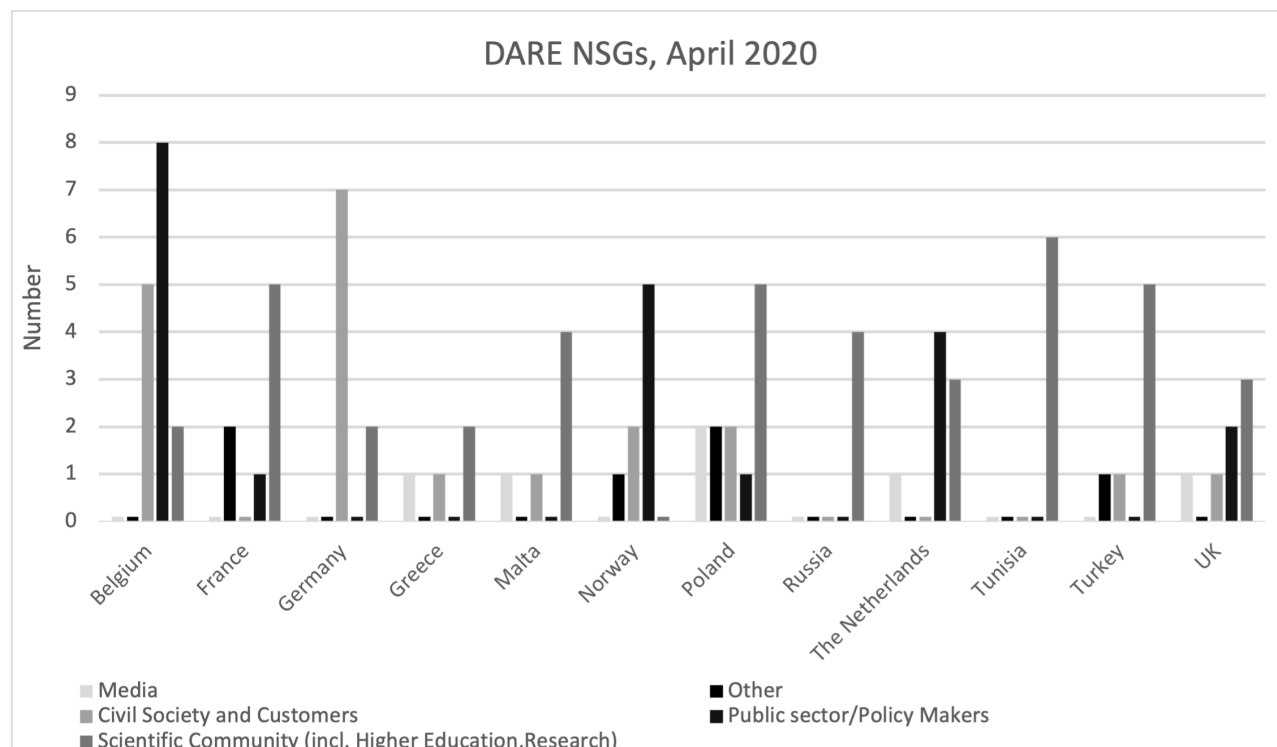
- i) advise on the development of the research,
- ii) discuss the significance of emerging findings,
- iii) advise on the production of Policy Briefs and Recommendations, and
- iv) facilitate the dissemination of research findings into policy arenas at local, national and European levels.<sup>17</sup>

The NSGs were foreseen in all DARE countries, except Croatia, where no fieldwork was planned. All DARE partners responsible for a NSG, wrote minutes of their NSG meetings, which were collected by the DARE Impact Manager, who was monitoring the work with the NSGs. By April 2020, NSGs had met at least once in all 12 countries; altogether, 27 NSG meetings took place between May 2017 and April 2020. With the start of the pandemic, physical meetings were no longer possible. However, between May 2020 and October 2021 six virtual NSG meetings and one face-to-face meeting took place in four different countries (Germany, Norway, Poland, and the United Kingdom). Furthermore, DARE

colleagues had individual online meetings with NSG members to discuss the progress of DARE as well as dissemination activities at national and European level. For example, several NSG members from different countries (France, Germany, Norway, and the United Kingdom) were involved in presenting their work at the virtual DARE Research-Policy-Practice Event from 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021.

The NSGs varied in the types of stakeholders involved. In countries such as Turkey and Tunisia where radicalisation is a highly political and contentious topic, NSGs were comprised mainly of academic members. In Belgium, Norway and the Netherlands, employees from the public sector and policy makers were the dominant group. Over the course of the project, the composition of the NSGs changed, some members left because they retired or moved to a new job (or because the employer did not agree to their participation in an NSG related to radicalisation) and new members with a different background joined the NSGs. The NSGs, which started in 2017 and 2018, had fewer active members in 2020 and 2021. In spring 2020, most NSGs had between four to eight members. All these changes influenced the discussions of possible dissemination and exploitation actions leading to impact. The total number of members was 94 (not counting the DARE team members), nearly as many women as men were members in the NSGs (50 male and 44 female). The following figure illustrates the diversity of NSG members in the different DARE countries.

**Figure 3:** Diversity and number of the NSG members in the different countries<sup>8</sup>



<sup>7</sup> DARE (2020), Description of Action, page 107. Not public.

<sup>8</sup> The classification follows the EC reporting system for H2020 projects. Representatives from industry and investors were not members in any of the NSGs. The figure shows the diversity and numbers of the NSG members based on reports from NSG meetings from the start of the project (May 2017) until the beginning of the pandemic (April 2020).

## NSGs – RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

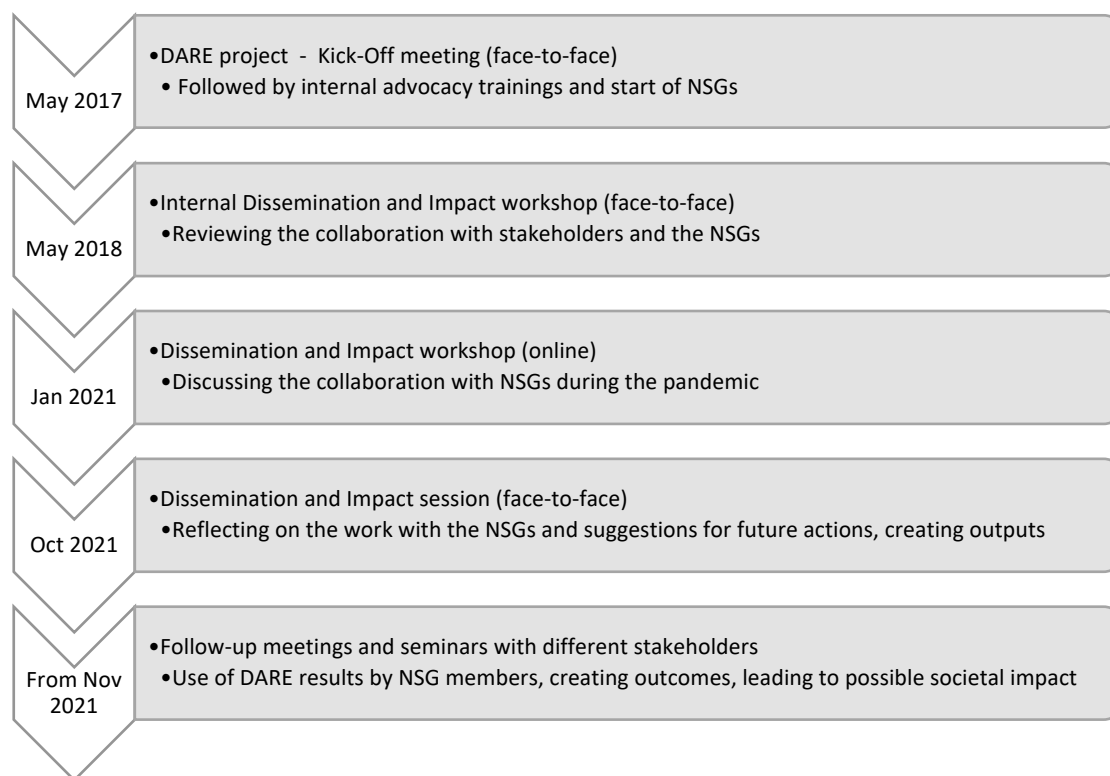
Establishing the NSGs and involving their members in discussions about DARE created inspiring dialogues with stakeholders, even during the pandemic at online meetings.

The NSGs and their members contributed to the three main objectives related to DARE's collaboration with stakeholders: information-

gathering, advisory and dissemination activities. NSG members, for example, supported researchers to find interviewees, participated in DARE events and contributed to the dissemination of DARE results.<sup>9</sup>

The following figure illustrates the development of the work with the NSGs:

**Figure 4:** Process of working with NSGs



During the last project meeting in October 2021, DARE partners concluded that NSGs which had mainly practitioners and/or academics as members were more stable: these stakeholders were interested in the project development and glad to contribute to it. For example, practitioners in Norway underlined that they appreciated the possibility to meet with other practitioners and academics and to have open discussions about their work. Involving policy makers as NSG members was experienced as 'difficult': they expect easy-to-communicate results, which are often only available at the end of the project.

As a H2020 project, DARE has not used the three HE KIP indicators, which were published after the start of DARE. However, relating DARE to the KIPs and the related indicators it can be stated that DARE has been working with some of the KIPs described for scientific and societal impact (see Figure 1):

For example, DARE has created *new knowledge*, which has been used for writing peer-reviewed articles, research briefs,

policy briefs and for producing films and educational toolkits.

Creating these outputs fits into the short-term societal impact pathway indicators (see Figure 2):

Through its outputs DARE has addressed *EU policies* and involved *end-users*, e.g., as members of NSGs.

However, tracking impact after the end of the project is limited. We don't know yet how often DARE outputs will be used for creating outcomes<sup>10</sup>, for example for changing a de-radicalisation programme. It is even more difficult to track if DARE outputs and outcomes will lead to societal impacts, for example, if the toolkits will lead to combating radicalisation through dialogue. However, based on their experiences, the majority of DARE partners recommend NSGs as a tool for supporting pathways towards societal impact. Such pathways need to be described in HE proposals for Research and Innovation Actions (RIAs) and Innovation Actions (IAs) and must relate to the outcomes specified in the topic

<sup>9</sup> These findings are based on the reports from NSG meetings and the evaluation of questionnaires sent to NSG members.

<sup>10</sup> European Commission (2021c), page 29: Definition of outcome:

"The expected effects, over the medium term, of projects supported under a given topic. The results of a project should contribute to these outcomes, fostered by the dissemination and exploitation measures. This may include the uptake, diffusion, deployment, and/or use of the project's results by direct target groups. Outcomes generally occur during or shortly after the end of the project."

and the wider impacts specified in the respective destination of the work programme.

## 2.2 THE INSTITUTIONAL CASE STUDY: WORKING WITH IMPACT AT THE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF DENMARK

Many universities nowadays face financial challenges, threatening both their ability to perform research and their role as part of the innovation ecosystem and global economy. Those challenges also affect their need to attract talented researchers, who can contribute with their knowledge and networks to develop a specific research area and to boost the universities' competitiveness. To address those challenges, universities have started implementing strategies and developing frameworks to increase their capability to attract external research funding. At the same time, funding bodies are focusing more on impact.

### THE RESEARCH IMPACT PROJECT – DESCRIPTION

In May 2020, the Technical University of Denmark (DTU) launched a Research Impact Project as part of the university's broader sustainability programme<sup>11</sup>. The main programme objective was to promote a sustainable change in society through research, education, and innovation, and to create a more sustainable future. The project ran from May 2020 until May 2021 (see Figure 6) and is DTU's first attempt to address research impact at a corporate level.

The purpose of DTU's Research Impact Project was twofold: on the one hand, it aimed at providing the researchers with the necessary tools, guidelines and methodologies that could, inter alia, support them in addressing the societal and economic impact of their research to secure research funding and international competitiveness. On the other hand, it focused on empowering DTU's researchers in enhancing the benefits of their research outside academia. Figure 5 summarised the goal of the project and was used by the author to present it to the university leadership.

**Figure 5:** Purpose of the Research Impact Project

WHY?	HOW?
<p>Empower the researchers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance the benefits of their research on the society;</li> <li>Remain competitive;</li> <li>Secure funding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand impact and apply the principles in different contexts;</li> <li>Start a discussion about the need of a definition;</li> <li>Identify and develop tools for understanding and addressing impact.</li> </ul>

Despite the fact that DTU's "Strategy 2020-2025 Technology for people" (Technical University of Denmark, n.d.) specifically mentions innovation and sustainability, DTU does not have an impact strategy or a dedicated research impact, communications and engagement team to ensure that the researchers' work has a broader reach and application that go beyond the research community. Therefore, to set a direction for the work on impact during the project, the project group agreed to use a working definition of impact that reflects DTU's strategy. The chosen definition is as follows:

*"Impact is the provable effects of research in the real world; The changes we can see (demonstrate, measure, capture), beyond academia (in society, economy, environment) which happen because of our research (caused by, contributed to, attributable to); Driven by a number of factors including funders' requirements and research assessment." (See: Bayley and Phipps 2017, page 4)*

When the project was initiated, HE had not yet started. Despite knowing that there would be a paradigm change in the design of HE "from an activity-driven to an impact-driven programme" (European Commission 2021a, page 9) and despite being aware of the content of the "EUROPE Impact Assessment of the 9th EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation" (European Commission 2018a), it was still not clear how the new impact design and the Key Impact Pathways would affect and would be critical for the content of the projects, the results, the expected outcomes and impacts. There was, however, sufficient impetus for many universities, and among them DTU, to start looking at impact in a more consistent way that could lead to addressing the targeted impact specified in the calls and topic texts. DTU's working definition was quite broad and did not take into consideration the time-sensitive aspects of impact and the differences between outcomes and impacts. These aspects emerged and became relevant during the project group's work, especially after obtaining more information on the development of the impact requirements in HE.

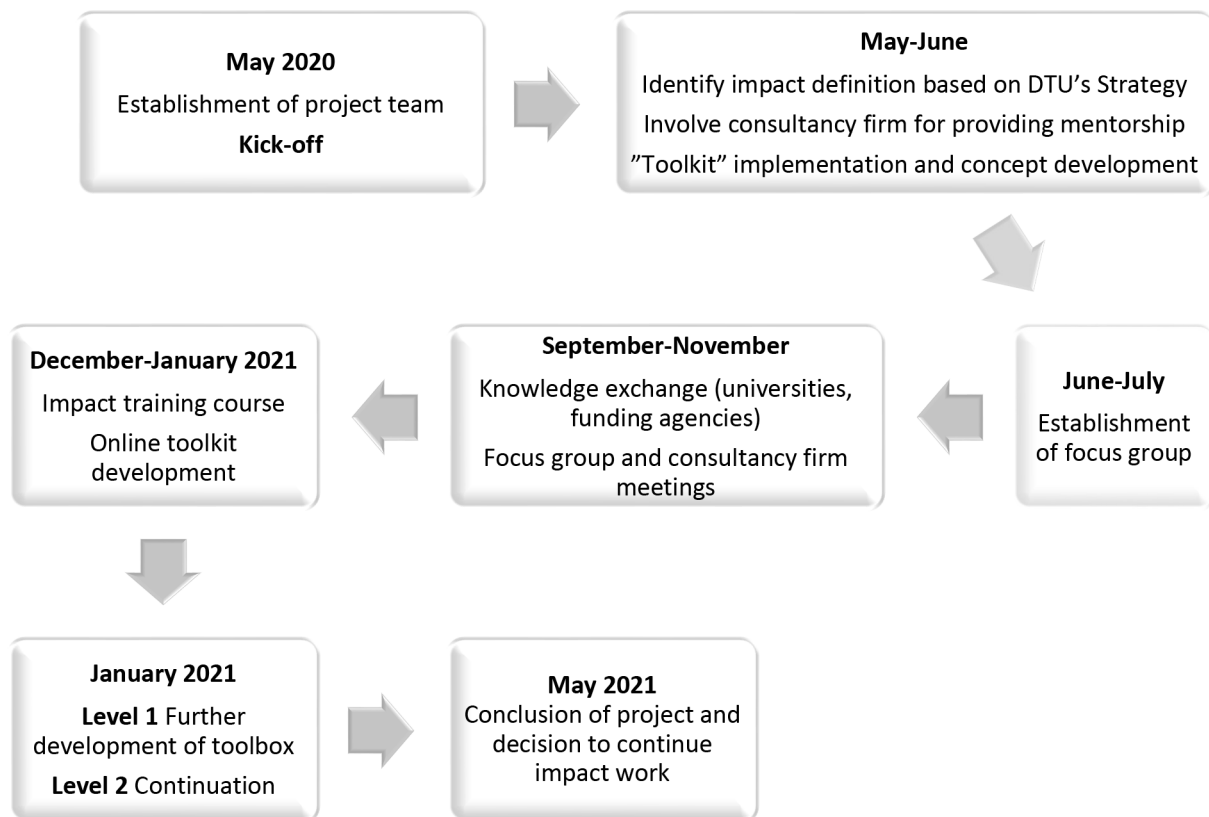
Having this in mind, the project group started to work in May 2020. Besides the co-author<sup>12</sup>, it was composed of the Head of Office for Research, Advice and Innovation, DTU's Corporate Sustainability Manager, and two employees from the Office for Research, Advice and Innovation.

One group member focussed on the "elite/excellence grants" that traditionally reward researchers based on their scientific achievements and their scientific impact; the co-author and another member worked on the impact requirements for the "competitive applications". The two other members contributed with inputs to both areas and ensured that the work was streamlined with the entire sustainability programme.

11 The sustainability programme was an internal initiative, public documents are not available.

12 The co-author Barbara Spanó worked at DTU until October 2021.

Figure 6: Research Impact Project process



The work on impact in the “elite/excellence grants” one-person sub-group was closely coordinated from the start with the directors and the researchers of four designated departments dealing with areas like quantitative sustainability assessment, life cycle analysis and the circular economy.

On the other hand, the sub-group working on impact in the “competitive applications” started its work by involving a consultancy firm to provide a mentorship to tap into the members’ existing knowledge, skills, and experience in working on stakeholder engagement and impact. The decision to have a mentorship programme was motivated by DTU’s interest in ensuring that the competencies acquired could stay in-house and eventually lead to an impact team.

During the mentorship the discussion mainly focused on understanding the meaning of impact, impact pathways, how to address the funding agencies’ requirements, the need to have an impact strategy, and how to support DTU’s researchers and administration in addressing and communicating impact.

Based on those discussions, the sub-group decided to establish a small focus group comprising six researchers and research managers from the chosen departments. The focus group was tasked with identifying and describing the researchers’ challenges when addressing impact in research applications. It was clear from the beginning that the group

lacked understanding of what impact is about and how the requirements from the funding agencies frame the way impact is described in the proposal and is assessed by the evaluators. The time-sensitive aspects and, in this regard, the difference between outcomes and impact were also unclear. Confusion was also added because many funding agencies also use the word impact when referring to outcomes.

The project group members worked on average around 25 % of their time on the project, while the focus group members contributed around two hours a month. The project group and the focus group met around five times.

In addition to the focus group, many universities in Europe and Denmark as well as European and Danish private and public funding agencies contributed to the project by sharing with DTU their knowledge and approach in working with impact. They presented the mechanisms they established to support fundraisers and researchers to address impact and their requirements on how to address socio-economic impact in the medium and longer-term.

The feedback from the focus group and the learning from other institutions were taken into consideration in developing tools for supporting researchers and research managers in writing applications and will be taken into consideration if DTU decides to have a specific Impact Strategy<sup>13</sup>.

## THE RESEARCH IMPACT PROJECT – RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The project was DTU's first attempt at tackling societal impact at the corporate level. It succeeded in raising awareness of societal impact both at the leadership level and with the researchers and fundraisers.

It provided support to the researchers, developed an understanding of research impact, collected and designed relevant tools, created a web page with impact-related documents, held and planned workshops and seminars.

After one year's work, the project's main findings can be summarised as follows:

- *A common understanding of impact at a fundamental level is needed*; however, the naturally associated processes and concepts are dynamic. Funding agencies and other stakeholders have specific and changing requirements regarding what can be considered "societal impact" as well as the way it should be described in the applications and reported both during and after the end of the projects. Universities need to constantly adjust their response to the specific requirements of the funding agencies by identifying relevant solutions and tools. How societal impacts can and should be achieved through research projects affects how results are communicated, disseminated, and exploited, which, in turn, changes how universities implement research and innovation.
- The *terminology of 'impact' and 'outcome'*: The differences between 'impact' and 'outcomes' in time, reach, scope and nature, are not always understood by researchers and are addressed in different ways by funding agencies.
- *A dedicated impact strategy*: Having an impact strategy shows a commitment from the leadership in handling research impact at the corporate level. Universities that have a specific impact strategy allocate more time and resources to supporting researchers in achieving societal impact. They have implemented structures and measures across departments (i.e., research, communication, partnerships, etc.) and disciplines, which ensures that the creation of societal impact is taken into consideration from the start, that relevant stakeholders are involved both during and after the end of the project, and that appropriate resources are provided. Training courses are offered to both academics and research managers to assess and boost their skills. There is a clear understanding of the roles and the level of support that can be expected at the institutional level.
- *Drivers*: Despite the interest the project received from researchers, fundraisers and department-level management, it can be difficult to activate and engage the researchers as many still perceive impact as something that lies on the periphery of their core tasks. Moreover, many funding agencies, public and private, focus only on research activities, making it harder for the researchers to understand the benefit of allocating time to activities like communication, dissemination and exploitation

when applying for funding that has specific requirements in that direction. The project identified four main drivers: i) funders' requirements (e.g., impact as an evaluation criteria); ii) incentives at the university level (i.e., direct influence on the career of the researchers or financial benefit); iii) assessment requirements at the national level (e.g., the Research Excellence Framework, UK<sup>14</sup>); iv) the researchers' own clarity and commitment to social and economic change in the medium and longer-term.

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the project team decided to continue to work on impact at DTU. It assessed the need for constant capacity building among the researchers and the support staff as well as the need to involve the researchers themselves in the process. It also decided to eventually involve other expertise and offices like the bibliometric unit within the office for Research and counselling, the Library, and the office of Communication and Media tasked with developing and supporting DTU's external and internal communication. Finally, the project team agreed to define and develop indicators to measure the societal impact of research projects, starting with sustainability indicators.

## 3. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the way HE is conceived and its increased focus on impact, understanding the KIPs and the related indicators will be essential for the development and submission of excellent proposals and for the implementation of successful projects. Understanding the indicators and the way they will be used cannot only be a task for advisers and researchers working on HE proposals and projects. If HE and its projects are to create societal impacts at the regional, national and EU levels, the KIPs and the indicators as well as the policy behind them<sup>15</sup> have to be understood by the leadership of universities and other organisations involved in HE. Furthermore, the indicators will make it easier to compare possible societal impacts in different countries and to visualise the influence of HE and its projects on R&I and other EU policies.

The DTU case study focused on impact and KIPs at the proposal level and while doing that it started an institutional change process to better value the impact of research and innovation conducted at the university. The DARE case study focused on using NSGs as a tool for promoting impact pathways during the implementation of the project. In HE there is a clear expectation that the projects should continue to work on impact years after the end of the project itself. Measures like the Horizon Results Platform, the Horizon Impact Award, and the Innovation Radar offer support for working on impact and provide platforms where the results are shared and hopefully used by different stakeholders, aiming in this way at ensuring that impact can be achieved years after the end of a project.

This leads, though, to a series of open questions:

- How can the societal impact be tracked back to a specific research project? And is this the goal of the KIP indicators? Regarding the policy outcomes, it should also be noted that most high-level policy documents do not cite any sources and most of the impact in this sense is hidden in data sets like Overton<sup>16</sup>.

14 <https://www.ref.ac.uk/>, viewed February 16, 2022.

15 See: European Commission (2021b), HORIZON EUROPE STRATEGIC PLAN 2021 – 2024, Brussels.

16 Overton website: Is your work influencing policy? <https://www.overton.io/>, viewed February 16, 2022.



- How will the EC support the beneficiaries in working on the medium-term and longer-term impact that happens after the end of the project?
- How can particular attention be given to exploiting results and information that can be used as an input to EU policymaking by the Commission Services and national administrations? This will necessitate better connections between implementing bodies and policymakers, including R&I supported under institutional partnerships.

Besides these questions, the case studies described above show that an institutional impact project and even a research project can benefit from using HE KIPs and their indicators and at the same time feed into R&I policies: the indicators can support the complex work with impact, can enrich the discussions, monitoring and reporting and can be useful for feedback to research-funding bodies.

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**KEYWORDS:** Horizon Europe, Indicators, Impact Pathways, Stakeholders