How to maximise the impact of your Horizon Europe project results

What will you learn in this module?

In this module you will learn about …

- Why it is important to communicate the impact of your project for different stakeholders: society, business and academia
- How to valorise the results from Horizon Europe projects
- How to capture and communicate the value of the R&D results

Impact of projects

All funding agencies, whether its EU-level programmes such as Horizon Europe or national R&D project instruments, require that funded projects create a positive impact.

Impact can be summarised in layman terms as answer to the question "How does the project make the world a better place?"

Impact is hard to predict and demonstrate, and oftentimes even impossible to achieve during the project's short lifespan, but the funding agencies nonetheless require you to aim for this impact in the long-run. Impact plays a key role in the evaluation of which projects get funding and which do not. Different funding instruments and calls have their own criteria. As such, any project plan needs to identify and communicate the impact clearly. Three different types of impact are demonstrated in figure x.

Societal impact is the demonstrable contribution for advancing the needs of the society such as quality of life, development of public services and processes or policy.

Academic impact is the demonstrable contribution that excellent social and economic research makes to scientific advances, across and within disciplines, including significant advances in understanding, method, theory and application.

Economic impact: The demonstrable contribution to society and the economy, of benefit to individuals, organisations and nations by: fostering global economic performance, and specifically the economic competitiveness; increasing the effectiveness of public services and policy; enhancing quality of life, health and creative output.
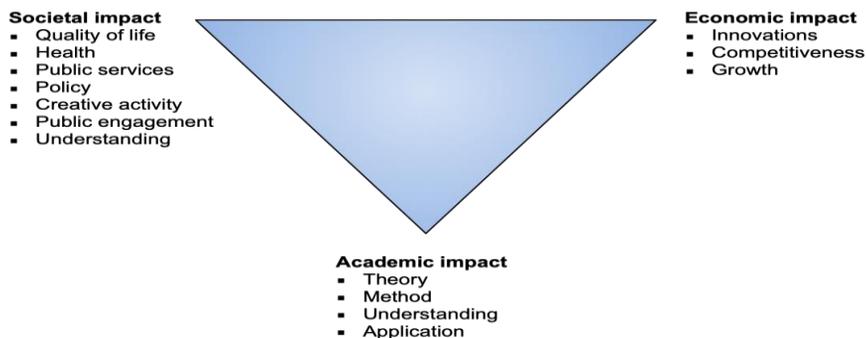

Societal impact
- Quality of life
- Health
- Public services
- Policy
- Creative activity
- Public engagement
- Understanding

Economic impact
- Innovations
- Competitiveness
- Growth

Academic impact
- Theory
- Method
- Understanding
- Application

Figure x *Former Research Councils UK divided the different types of impact created in university-business-cooperation projects into societal, academic and economic impact. (Source: University of Helsinki, 2014)*

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Thinking about projects from the perspective of the impact helps to set shared meaning for collaboration between universities and business

Nobody is reading your PDF
Download distribution of World Bank policy reports, 2008 to 2012

SOURCE: The World Bank
GRAPHIC: The Washington Post. Published May 8, 2014

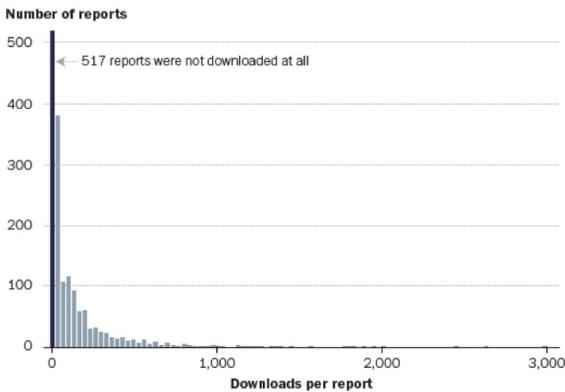*Figure x What is the societal impact of a report or study without proper dissemination and collaboration with partners who can take its insight into action? PDF reports do not automatically translate into impact. (Source: The Washington Post, 8.5.2014)*

If you are an academic, think: why did you become a researcher in the first place? Perhaps you wanted to increase knowledge and understanding or help make the world a better place - while creating new insight. If you are a business, you are probably motivated by the same things - helping people, organisations or society with your new solution, while simultaneously creating business opportunities for yourself, workers and the company.

Considering the impact also helps to understand the project from the perspective of needs of the market, society and users, as all projects need to have a real-life need or opportunity they are focused on. Impact gives a shared purpose for various partners, creates commitment and mobilises resources.

Do not mistake outputs and outcomes as impact

A common mistake for projects is to mistake their activities as "impact". This is where the IOOI (Input-Output-Outcome-Impact) framework comes to play that can be seen in figure x. Originally developed by the German Bertelsmann Foundation, IOOI is a simple tool that anyone working with projects can use to design and showcase their impact.

- Input: Resources that make it possible to implement the project. Input can include money (e.g. project funding), personnel and hours worked, contributions of partners and networks.

- Output: Activities undertaken as part of the project. May include R&D activity, events, training sessions, number of demos, prototypes, minimum viable product (MVP) created or pilots implemented.

- Outcome: Measurable short-term concrete change that project activities create. One should be able to demonstrate a clear link between outputs and outcomes either with quantifiable or qualitative means.

- Impact: Long-term positive change (societal, academic, economic) that the project creates. May happen beyond the project's time frame in the near future.

Checklist for setting measurable impact:

- Is there a clearly defined real-life need or opportunity you are solving, and do you know the status quo of this issue?

- Have you specified the target group whose need you are addressing with the project?

- Have you set time-specific and measurable impacts (society, academic economic) instead of
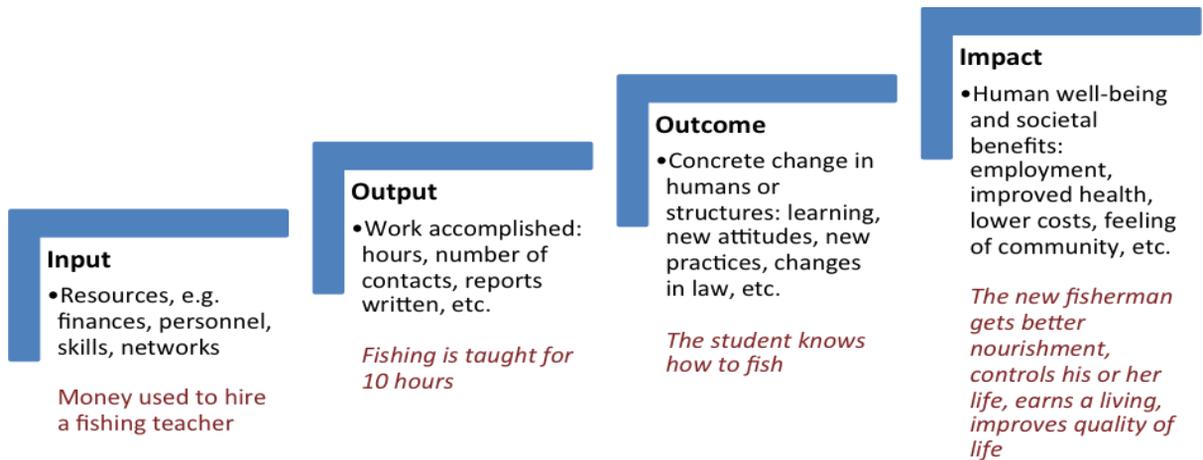
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Input
- Resources, e.g. finances, personnel, skills, networks

Money used to hire a fishing teacher

Output
- Work accomplished: hours, number of contacts, reports written, etc.

Fishing is taught for 10 hours

Outcome
- Concrete change in humans or structures: learning, new attitudes, new practices, changes in law, etc.

The student knows how to fish

Impact
- Human well-being and societal benefits: employment, improved health, lower costs, feeling of community, etc.

The new fisherman gets better nourishment, controls his or her life, earns a living, improves quality of life

Figure x Example of IOOI framework, modified from (Source: Sitra, 2014)

rhetoric impact? E.g. "Improving the status of homeless people" vs. "We aim to reduce the homeless rate by 50% and its direct costs to the municipality by 10% by next ten years."

- Is it possible to achieve the outcomes within the project's time frame and how would you measure them?

Suggested readings

Is it worth trying to measure impact? - link (webpage)

A short article on impact thinking and measuring impact.

Mission Economy: A Moonshot Guide to Changing Capitalism, Mariana Mazzucato (2021)

An insightful book on mission-driven and impact-oriented thinking and how it can be used to mobilise commitment and resources across society, business and academia. Important for understanding why the European Union and national governments focus increasingly more on mission-driven innovation to seek solutions that promote renewal or help to solve wicked challenges such as sustainability.

Tools

IOOI framework and impact canvas - link (PowerPoint)

You can use both tools either in designing your project bid or use them as an attachment / figure to your project plan.

How to valorise results from projects?

Understand how valorisation can happen

Once you have an idea of the impact you are creating from the project, it is a good idea to plan in advance how a collaborative project between university and business can be valorised.

Term "valorisation" refers to capturing value from science through making scientific insights available to industry and or society. It means more than just traditional commercialization, such as commercial spinoffs or utilisation of patents.

Any kind of collaboration project between businesses and universities will always create new knowledge and skills that may lead to new intellectual property. Whether you are a HEI or SME representative, your project results can be valorised through a combination of various means. To tackle this, copyright issues should be

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established at an early stage of development. Also understand that depending on the national legislation, besides organisations, also employees in universities and businesses may have individual rights to inventions.

Table x shows an overview of the different types of valorisation possible from a collaborative university-business R&D project.

> 👉 Tip for HEIs
>
> *Most universities across Europe have technology transfer offices or similar support functions for during the preparation of the project, while it is ongoing or when you are considering valorisation of the results.*

> 👉 Tip for SMEs
>
> *It's in every company's interest to minimise potential IPR risk. For early stage-companies the risk is generally relatively low, while established companies have existing products, services and business functions that already include existing IPR as foundation. Despite this, remember to keep an inquisitive open mind.*

Identify the moments when valorisation can happen and who is the active owner

A joint R&D project is in many ways an entrepreneurial discovery process. Whether you are at the ideation, concept, validation or

TYPE	DESCRIPTION
New IP (intellectual property): Copyright, trademarks, brands, patents, design rights and licensing	All projects create trademarks, brands or copyrighted material that can be a further platform for commercial activity. This happens always and automatically even if you don't realise it. If you have multiple partners from several organisations, remember to make an agreement beforehand how this IP could be utilised. Certain types of inventions may be patented or licensed.
New business (startups, academic and business spinoffs)	A new company might be established to commercialise the results of the project. This requires transfer of IPR from the project (parties) to the new business. Often the new company is established by people working for the project, as such endeavour requires in-depth knowledge and tacit connections.
New services and/or products	A new commercial service or product may be created as a result of the outputs.
New processes and/or methods	The insight created by the project may also be valorised through new improved processes or methods that are implemented by some actor.
New policy, collaboration agreements and/or partnerships	Valorisation may also occur in more subtle ways if results of the project are disseminated into society or used to build foundations for future collaboration between different actors.

Table x: Different types of valorisation possible from a collaborative university-business R&D project.

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business development / dissemination stage, they all offer potential complementary opportunities for the consortium partners or even stakeholders to valorise the results.

In order for valorisation to happen at any stage, someone working with the project always needs to take an active ownership and be entrepreneurially driven to make use of the outputs.

Good practice example

CASE EXAMPLE: Urban Mill. A joint R&D programme of Finnish corporations and research institutes focused on built-environment innovations and commissioned a study in 2012 to explore how the programme's knowledge could be better commercialised. This study identified a need for a co-creation and innovation platform to be created as part of Aalto University campus. However, neither the research organisations nor the corporations were willing to build such platform. As nothing happened and nothing was valorised, the consultants working for the programme as contracted service providers took the helm, seized the opportunity and established the "Urban Mill" innovation platform as a business spinoff off the programme. They seized the opportunity and took entrepreneurial risk. This is a good example of someone taking an active ownership.

How to capture and communicate the value of the R&D results?

How to build a pitch?

Pitching is an essential skill for anyone involved in projects. A poorly delivered pitch may prevent an otherwise excellent project from getting funded, or later hinder attempts to find a partner or customer for the R&D results. To build a pitch, you need to focus on the essential value your project brings.

There are different types of pitches, see figure x. One-sentence pitch contains the essentials of the idea (e.g. unique value proposition) to grab the attention of the listener, while an elevator pitch has an engaging narrative. A longer pitch of around 3-7 minutes long may contain supporting material, such a presentation or video. An investor / project deck with detailed figures is something that can work independently without someone presenting it.

Five universal rules for building a pitch

Regardless of the type of the pitch or project, there are certain universal rules to keep in mind when crafting the pitch.
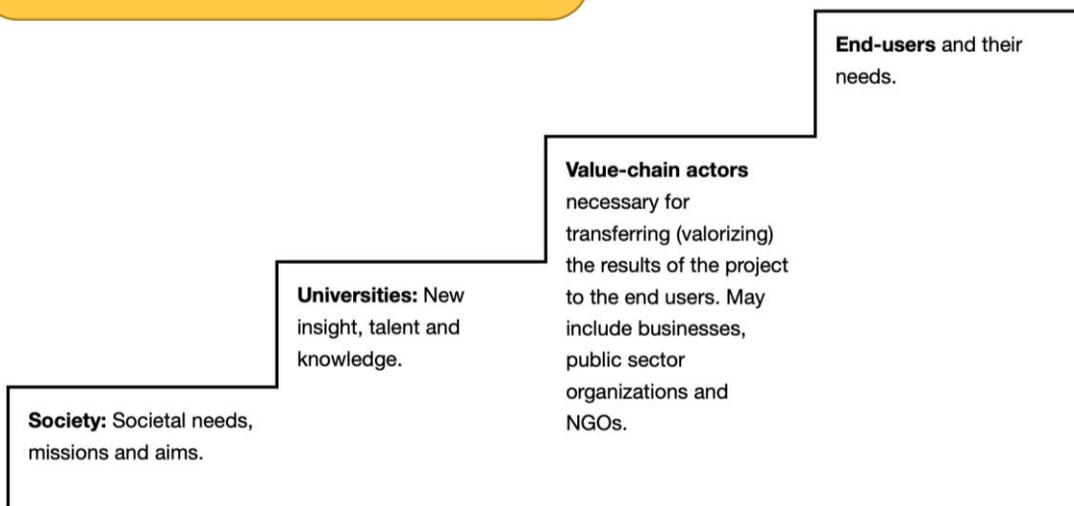

Figure x Reaching to impact. You can use this framework to identify relevant actors. (Source: Crazy Town, 2022)

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10 seconds	1-2 min	3-7 min	+10 min
ONE SENTENCE PITCH	**ELEVATOR PITCH**	**PITCH**	**INVESTOR / PROJECT DECK**

Figure x Different pitch types (Source: Crazy Town, 2022)

1. **Start the stage with a strong opening**: Try to capture audience attention from the get-go. It's harder to recreate impact mid-pitch than at the beginning. Facts, figures, numbers or a personal story often work!

2. **From problem → solution**: The structure of the pitch should start from Why?, moving towards How?, always focused on the value your solution brings. Try to be a storyteller and invoke emotions.

3. **KISS - Keep it simple, stupid**: Purpose of the pitch is never to tell everything, but to get the audience member interested in you and open dialogue afterwards. Have only one single governing thought in your pitch. Keep in mind that your audience isn't necessarily an expert in your domain, so leave jargon for follow up questions.

4. **Finish with call-to-action (CTA):** Speak for a specific target audience and know in advance how you want them to react. At the end of your pitch explain what you are looking for, whether it's funding, partners, customer participants, talents, mentors, etc.

5. **Be yourself and don't be afraid to be different.**

What to have in a pitch?

Usually, the structure of a 3-7 minute pitch follows a structure that addresses the following topics:

-Intro (one sentence pitch)
-Problem / need
-Solution & demo
Unique selling point / impact
-Business model and financials (if valid)
-Team
-Roadmap
-Call-to-action

Note that unless you are working on a project deck that is supposed to work independently, the purpose of the pitch is not to cover everything but to invoke a desired reaction in your audience. Therefore, be mindful of the balance between focus and details. Always end with call-to-action.

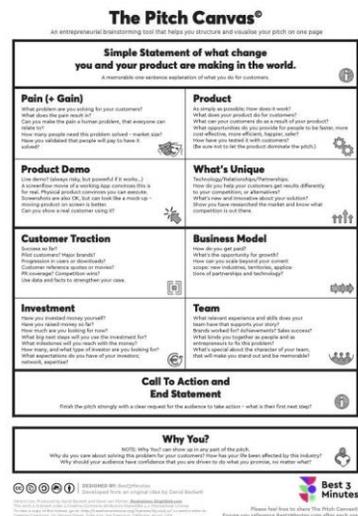The Pitch Canvas can be used for structuring your story with relevant questions, see figure x.

Figure x The Pitch Canvas (Source: Best 3 Minutes)

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Suggested readings

"How to pitch your initiative" - link

Training materials created for Erasmus+ project "Spanning Boundaries". Contains plenty of illustrative examples and links to recommended materials.

"How to build a pitch?" - link

Short webinar on building a pitch. Made with startups and growth businesses in mind but can be applied to R&D projects as well.

Tools

The Pitch Canvas - link

Good template with relevant questions to structure your pitch. Even though it is made with a business perspective, any R&D project can benefit from finding answers to the questions presented.

Are you an educator?

You can click here to go to the syllabus on page xx. This syllabus includes suggestions on the delivery of the module.

References

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