



SCOPE CASE STUDY @ GHENT UNIVERSITY

Nele Bracke, 19 September 2023

MILESTONES

2012
First debate
about DORA

2016
Vision
statement on
research
evaluation

2017
Guidelines for
responsible
use of
indicators

2020
Signed DORA

2022
Signed ARRA
Joined CoARA

2023
Action Plan
ARRA
Renewed
Vision
statement &
Guidelines

2018
Evaluation
and career
progression
model for
professorial
staff

2022
Recruitment
of
professorial
staff

RESEARCH EVALUATION

Responsible Research Evaluation

Responsible Use of Quantitative Indicators

For, by, and with researchers / academics

SCOPE

WHY

- 2023: Design new evaluation process, for consortia that have never been evaluated before
- 10 Interdisciplinary research consortia aimed at realising societal impact (IDC)
<https://www.ugent.be/en/research/science-society/idc/overview.htm>
- Challenges
 - Evaluation is mandatory, but rules and regulations are unclear about process and procedures
 - Evaluate the consortia not the people managing them
 - Consortia worried about how evaluation will look like and what impact (consequences) it might have
 - How to evaluate interdisciplinarity and societal impact?

WHAT

- 2 SCOPE workshops to co-create the evaluation (Spring 2023)



- 1 extra workshop to evaluate the process (to be decided, evaluation is organised Autumn 2023 / Spring 2024)

WHO

- Elizabeth Gadd and Tanja Strøm
 - SCOPE experts
 - Outsider's perspective
- IDC promoters + IDC research co-ordinators → part of the consortia being evaluated
- Policy advisors → co-design and implement the evaluation
- Members of the university's Research Council → evaluators + in charge of the evaluation

SOME LESSONS LEARNT

- low number of registrations for the workshops
- at first much resistance – format and content of the workshops
- later more engaged, open dialogue about evaluation

SOME LESSONS LEARNT

Dialogue between different stakeholders:

- Do we really need/want this evaluation?
- What is at stake? What might be the consequences of the evaluation?
- What is the specific context of the evaluation? How specific is it? How important is this specific context for the evaluation?

CONTEXT considerations

- Ensure your evaluation is context-specific
- WHO are you evaluating? (Entity size and discipline)
- WHY are you evaluating?

1. Evaluate only where necessary.

Evaluation is not always the right strategy. When it comes to incentivising behaviours, for example, it may be more fruitful to enable them than to evaluate them.

SOME LESSONS LEARNT

Co-creation process:

- define the aim of the evaluation, describe the values (what is important?)
- collect ideas for the methodology & criteria (pros and cons)

START with what you value

- Clearly articulate what you value about the entity being evaluated
- Not with what others' value (external drivers)
- Not with available data sources (the 'Streetlight Effect')

OPTIONS for evaluating

- Consider both quantitative and qualitative options
- Be careful when using quantities to indicate qualities

PROBE deeply

- WHO might your evaluation approach discriminate against?
- HOW might your evaluation approach be gamed?
- WHAT might the unintended consequences be?
- CONSIDER the cost-benefit of the evaluation

SOME LESSONS LEARNT

- Co-creation requires a change in the mindset from all stakeholders involved in an evaluation
- It gives a voice to the people being evaluated:
- Co-creation is a unique opportunity for the groups/people being evaluated to express their concerns and worries (impact of an evaluation) &
- to express what is important for them; how they think they should (or could) be evaluated
- Co-creation helps the organisers & evaluators to understand the impact that an evaluation can have & helps to organise an evaluation in an effective and efficient way

IN THE END

Innovating research assessment & Engaging researchers

- Not a walk in the park
- Rome wasn't built in a day
- Worth the effort to listen to all parties involved
- Makes it more likely that the evaluation is fit-for-purpose, & useful for both the organisers of the evaluation, the evaluators and the ones being evaluated

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