Assessing the impact of SSH: The Dutch approach

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Two tales of one city

1. A positive story about intentions and initiatives:
   - National habits
   - National policies
     - Research council NWO
     - Standard Evaluation Protocol for academic groups
   - National initiatives dedicated to SS and H
2. A realist story of perceptions and practices :
   - Commonly shared interpretations
   - Unease
     - that leads to even more sophisticated evaluation

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The Dutch approach to…

- Trust
- Financial decisions
- Evidence
- Measurement
- Impact

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Dutch approach to impact

- Impact or:
  - Valorisation – ministries
  - Knowledge utilization – research council NWO
  - Relevance to society – ex post evaluation protocol SEP
  - Impact – locally used
- Formal definitions are similar; it
  - is a process
  - aims at enhancing societal impact in the widest sense of the term
  - is possible in all different disciplines
  - can occur in many different forms

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NWO – Innovational Research Incentives Scheme

Veni, Vidi, Vici

Three criteria:

- quality of the researcher

- quality, innovative character and academic impact of the research proposal

- knowledge utilisation

The ex ante assessment of the latter regards:

- Potential: a realistic representation of the knowledge utilisation possibilities (or the lack of possibilities)

- Implementation: the extent to which the action plan is made tangible with respect to knowledge utilisation.

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NWO – Knowledge Utilization

A process promoting the use of the outcomes of scientific research both outside academia <u>and by other academic disciplines</u>.

This process frequently requires interaction between the researcher and the potential knowledge user and such interaction may occur at any stage of the research, from the formulation of the research question right through to the dissemination of the results.

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NWO - Evidence

Publication culture

Track record regarding knowledge utilization

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SEP: Standard Evaluation Protocol

- Assessment once every 6 years, ex post
- Board of university / research organisation is responsible
- Assessment takes place at research unit level
- The ~~four~~ three assessment criteria are:
  - academic quality
  - ~~academic productivity~~
  - relevance to society (criterion since 1994)
  - feasibility
- Review committee forms a judgment, based on self-evaluation by the unit (including metrics) and site visit
- No predefined consequences

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SEP 2015-2021 – Relevance to society

The committee assesses the quality, scale and relevance of contributions targeting specific economic, social or cultural target groups, of advisory reports for policy, of contributions to public debates, and so on.

The point is to assess contributions in areas that the research unit has itself designated as target areas.

Standard Evaluation Protocol
2015 – 2021

Protocol for Research Assessments
in the Netherlands

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SEP 2015-2021 – A narrative + a table

A narrative indicates what relevance to, impact on or added value for society the research unit's work has (had) at regional, national or international level….

The narrative describes:

- the precise work or research projects involved;
- the individuals involved and their roles;
- the nature of the research unit's relevance to or impact on society and the scope of that relevance or impact;
- <u>how the unit achieved this</u>;
- whether revenue has been generated.

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Table D1 Table with output indicators

		Quality Domains	
		Research quality	Relevance to society
Assessment Dimensions	**Demonstrable products**	1. Research products for peers Examples of indicators: - Research articles (refereed vs. non-refereed) - Scientific/scholarly books - Other research outputs (instruments, infrastructure, datasets, software tools or designs that the unit has developed) - Dissertations - … - …	4. Research products for societal target groups Examples of indicators: - Reports (for example for policymaking) - Articles in professional journals for non-academic readers - Other outputs (instruments, infrastructure, datasets, software tools or designs that the unit has developed) for societal target groups - Outreach activities, for example lectures for general audiences and exhibitions - … - …
	Demonstrable use of products	2. Use of research products by peers Examples of indicators: - Citations - Use of datasets, software tools, etc. by peers - Use of research facilities by peers - Reviews in scientific/scholarly journals - … - …	5. Use of research products by societal groups Examples of indicators: - Patents/licences - Use of research facilities by societal parties - Projects in cooperation with societal parties - Contract research - … - …
	Demonstrable marks of recognition	3. Marks of recognition from peers Examples of indicators: - Science awards/scholarly prizes - Research grants awarded to individuals - Invited lectures - Membership of scientific committees, editorial boards, etc. - … - …	6. Marks of recognition by societal groups Examples of indicators: - Public prizes - Valorisation funding - Number of appointments/positions paid for by societal parties - Membership of civil society advisory bodies - … - …

Series of reports "Quality indicators"

- Social sciences
- Humanities
- Design and engineering disciplines

Dimensions	Scientific quality	Societal quality
Demonstrable output		
Demonstrable utilisation		
Demonstrable recognition		

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QRiH: Quality and Relevance in the Humanities

- Related to SEP
- Introduces a <u>narrative</u> for the entire unit: mission, academic as well as societal perspective
- Evidence: <u>case studies</u> as well as quantitative indicators
- "Hybrid products:"
  - Books and articles intended for multiple audiences
  - Exhibition catalogs
  - Serious games

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Unease, or (impact) policies in practice

- Trust
- Finance
- Evidence
- Measurement
- Impact

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Unease with the sociologists

- Nederlandse Sociologische Vereniging: *Naar een evenwichtige kwaliteitsbeoordeling van sociologisch onderzoek*
Dutch Sociology Association: *Towards a well-balanced evaluation of quality of sociological research*

- Focus on international peer reviewed publications; neglect of engagement with society

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More unease: Science in Transition

- "Science is in need of fundamental reform. That is the belief of the initiators of Science in Transition. Science has become a self-referential system where quality is measured mostly in bibliometric parameters and where societal relevance is undervalued."
- New evaluation approach (SEP + job appraisal) in University Medical Center Utrecht
- Mission of academic hospital is central

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University Medical Center Utrecht

- Structure
    - Leadership&culture
    - Collaboration with stakeholders
    - Continuity & infrastucture

- Process
    - Setting research priorities
    - Posing the right questions
    - Incorporation of next steps
    - Design, conduct, analysis
    - Regulation and management

- Outcomes
    - As defined in SEP

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Thank you!

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