



OSIRIS

OSLO INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH
ON THE IMPACT OF SCIENCE

We are pleased to announce OSIRIS' first newsletter. Here you will find some of the highlights of 2017. OSIRIS - Oslo Institute for Research on the Impact of Science (OSIRIS) - was established in 2016. It is funded by the Forinnpol programme in the Research Council of Norway and will run for 8 years. The central questions of OSIRIS evolves around: how can we characterise the process through which research makes an impact in society? Which preconditions are required for research to be put into use in industry, health and care, policymaking and other contexts?

2017: conceptual and methodological work

2017 has been a very active year for OSIRIS. The focus has been on conceptual and methodological work to prepare for the substantial empirical work starting in 2018. We have needed to discuss what it means to look at impact as a process seen mainly from the user side, and how this can be addressed in various forms of data collection.

The OSIRIS team has discussed and presented this conceptual and methodological work at various internal meetings. It also formed the basis of a special paper session at the Atlanta Conference on Science and Innovation Policy in October, co-organised with the Centre for Research Quality and Policy Impact Studies ([R-Quest](#)).

The first longitudinal cases have been selected late 2017. These concern the use of research for developing smart cities, use of research for challenges related to biodiversity, and use of research for dealing with rare diseases. More cases will be selected in 2018 alongside further development of the case protocol and initiating contact with relevant research and user organisations.

Main events 2017

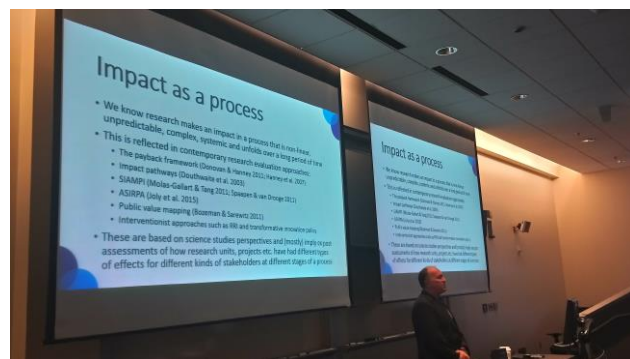
OSIRIS at the Atlanta conference

OSIRIS and R-Quest organised a special session at the [Atlanta Conference on Science and Innovation Policy](#). The session was named “Beyond established impact assessment approaches in STI policy”. Here, authors and the audience discussed new theoretical and empirical approaches related to



studies of the impact of research. Finding several problems with the current state-of-the-art of impact studies, the four invited papers aimed at opening up impact studies explicitly and systematically to broader normative debates.

Paper 1: Magnus Gulbrandsen, Taran Thune, Richard Woolley: *Research impact as a process*. The paper discussed the conceptual and methodological implications of a process view of research impact and aimed to tie the science and innovation policy debate about impact to wider frameworks of institutional and organizational change.



Paper 2: Jakob Edler, Kate Barker and Maria Karaulova: *How to benefit? Conceptualising the demand for and absorption of research for policy making*. The paper developed a conceptual framework to understand the demand for and use of research in policy making.

Paper 3: Gunnar Sivertsen: *Frameworks for the understanding and evaluation of the societal impact of research in the humanities*. The paper aimed to test out different frameworks of understanding the societal relevance of research. The study was based on more than 300 individual cases of societal impact in the humanities that have been reported to national research evaluation exercises in two countries, the United Kingdom in 2014 and Norway in 2016.

Paper 4: Maria Nedeva and Duncan Thomas: *Assessing the Impact of Complex Policy Instruments on the Science System: REF and the 'British Science System'*. The paper investigated the impact of a specific, and complex, policy instrument (the REF in the UK) on the universities in the UK.

Nordic workshop

OSIRIS organised a Nordic workshop in Oslo in March on the impact of social science and humanities research, drawing on experts from the centre's scientific advisory board. The workshop discussed the complexities of the new buzzword of impact used in science policy to describe the expectations that



science in one way or another will lead to benefits outside of the scientific community. The workshop highlighted how the demand for impact in EU policy documents, research support, and national evaluation efforts leads to difficult questions about evaluation, timing, indicators and policy. The 60 participants were delegates from all the Nordic countries involved in policy, funding, administration and support of research within social science and humanities and researchers interested in the topic of impact. All the presentations are available at the [OSIRIS web site](#).

Seminar on impact cases in research evaluations

In November, OSIRIS organised a joint open seminar with R-Quest on “impact case studies” that are becoming more and more popular in many countries as a tool for evaluation of research. The UK Research Excellence Framework (REF) evaluation introduced impact cases as a methodology in 2014 in the form of short (two pages) descriptions that document how a concrete outcome is related to a specific research product such as a publication. This method has later spread to other countries, including Norway where it has so far been used in at least four large-scale evaluations of research.

At the meeting, this methodology was discussed including questions such as: What can we learn from it? Can it be organised in a better way? Do the benefits outweigh the administrative costs? What are the alternatives to this form of impact measurement in research evaluations? Although many of the participants were skeptical about whether the cases can say anything meaningful about broad forms of impact and researcher engagement, there were also a number of positive voices that showed how the cases had helped improve the understanding and practices of impact in research organisations and their funders.

Workshop on Medical Innovation

In December, OSIRIS co-hosted and participated at the 5th annual Workshop on Medical Innovation (WOMI) at the University of Iceland.

A central area in OSIRIS is to improve understanding of impact of research within health and care. For two days around 20 researchers from all over Europe were gathered for discussions



about academic papers, projects and future research agendas. The main topics at the workshop covered different perspectives on medical research and innovation: Public policy, evolution of knowledge, education related to innovation and entrepreneurship within healthcare, pharmaceuticals and networks. Magnus Gulbrandsen and Taran Thune from the OSIRIS team participated and presented the planned OSIRIS survey work related to use of research in healthcare and policymaking.

PhD-course

A PhD course called “Research, Innovation and Impact” was organised by OSIRIS and held in Oslo in late November. It probably represents the first specialised science policy PhD course in Norway. The course was supported by the Norwegian Research School in Innovation ([NORSI](#)). 15 PhD students, one prospective student and a postdoc followed the one-week intensive course. Representatives from the Ministry of Research and Education and the Research Council of Norway (RCN) also participated in some of the sessions. RCN personnel organised a group work about impact cases for the PhD students on one of the days. From OSIRIS, Pablo d’Este, Magnus Gulbrandsen, Isamel Rafols and Taran Thune lectured.



See the full [program](#) here.

2017 – publications

Three 2017 publications target impact measurement, the activities and background of societally engaged researchers, and the early stages of impact generation in medicine:

Magnus Gulbrandsen (2017), [Hvordan kan impact måles? I Det norske forsknings- og innovasjonssystemet – statistikk og indikatorer 2017](#). Oslo: Norges forskningsråd, s. 155-6.

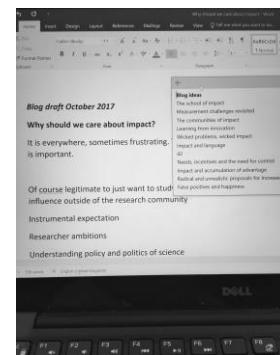
Magnus Gulbrandsen and Taran Mari Thune (2017), [The effects of non-academic work experience on external interaction and research performance](#), *Journal of Technology Transfer*, 42(4), 795-813.



Taran Mari Thune and Magnus Gulbrandsen (2017), [Combining knowledge to generate novelty: a study of disclosed ideas for life science inventions](#), *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 20:446-462.

The OSIRIS blog

The OSIRIS blog was launched in October 2017. The blog aims for a collection of posts that represent preliminary and conceptual findings and ideas, discussions and opinions from meetings and seminars, shorter analyses of empirical data and brief summaries of the vast literature on impact. Some of the posts will be shared with the Impact Blog at the London School of Economics (LSE), the most comprehensive web page devoted to this topic. The blog is also open for contributions from people outside of the OSIRIS team.



The first blog post “[Research excellence and impact](#)” by Richard Woolley and Nicolas Robionson-Garcia was shared with the LSE Impact Blog and has received a lot of attention. It was also published in a Spanish version on the blog “Nada es gratis” in March 2018. The second blog post by Ismael Ràfols was titled “[There’s no silver bullet for measuring societal impact](#)”.

OSIRIS on Twitter

The centre’s Twitter account [@OSIRIS_TIK](#) is active in discussions about research impact and science policy.

New staff in 2017:

Two new researchers have joined the OSIRIS team in 2017. Maria Karaulova started as a postdoc in Manchester in the spring, dividing her time equally between OSIRIS and R-Quest. She will be responsible for much of the case and survey work in the UK related to impact of research within



policymaking. Lars Wenaas joined TIK as a public researcher just before the summer. His project is about open access including how this may influence impact.

OSIRIS at international conferences

OSIRIS researchers and affiliated personnel are regularly invited to speak at international conferences about impact. The following is a list of the OSIRIS-related presentations at various academic and specialist meetings so far in the centre's lifespan:

Paul Benneworth (2017), Impact and public values. Nordic workshop on impact of social science and humanities research, Oslo, 27 March 2017.

Brita Bye, Marit Klemetsen and Arvid Raknerud (2017), The effects of innovation policies on firm level patenting. Seminar series Firm Behaviour and Performance at NHH, 9th May 2017.

Claire Donovan (2017), Humanities and social science in the UK REF impact studies. Nordic workshop on impact of social science and humanities research, Oslo, 27 March 2017.

Jakob Edler and Maria Karaulova (2017), Better understanding impact of scientific knowledge on policy by conceptualising policy making conditions. Atlanta Conference on Science and Innovation Policy, 10-11 October 2017.

Jordi Molas-Gallart (2017), Assessing the impact of the social sciences and humanities: the SIAMPI approach. Nordic workshop on impact of social science and humanities research, Oslo, 27 March 2017.

Magnus Gulbrandsen (2017), Do we need a separate discussion about impact for social science and the humanities? Nordic workshop on impact of social science and humanities research, Oslo, 27 March 2017.

Magnus Gulbrandsen (2017), What happened to applied research? Do we need to resuscitate it? Workshop on transformative innovation policy, Madrid, April 25th 2017.

Magnus Gulbrandsen (2017), How can we build long term and reciprocal research alliances? Keynote presentation at the conference “Boosting the Impact of Social Sciences and Humanities”, Cardiff University, 20-21 September 2017.

Magnus Gulbrandsen (2017), Uncertainty of science – is there a need for a new science policy? 6th European Research Policy Group meeting Oslo, 26 Oct 2017.

Magnus Gulbrandsen, Jakob Edler and Jordi Molas-Gallart (2016), Impact assessment and grand challenges. EU-SPRI annual conference, Lund, 8-10 June.

Magnus Gulbrandsen, Jakob Edler and Jordi Molas-Gallart (2016), Impact assessment and grand challenges. Open Evaluation 2016 Conference, Vienna, 24-25 November.

Magnus Gulbrandsen, Taran Mari Thune and Richard Woolley (2017), Research impact as a process. Atlanta Conference on Science and Innovation Policy, 10-11 October 2017.

Øivind Anti Nilsen, Arvid Raknerud and Diana Lancu (2017), Governmental Funding and Firms’ Performance. OECD workshop on Distributed microdata analysis on public support for business R&D, 30th March 2017.

Taran Mari Thune, Maria Karaulova, Caroline Sølvsberg Yakubu and Magnus Gulbrandsen (2017), Investigating trajectories of research impact in health care and public policy contexts. 5th International workshop on medical innovation (WOMI), Reykjavik, 14-15 December.

Leonie van Drooge (2017), Assessing the impact of the social sciences and humanities: the Dutch approach. Nordic workshop on impact of social science and humanities research, Oslo, 27 March 2017.

OSIRIS’ interaction with policymakers

Most of the meetings organised by OSIRIS or with participation from the team have included interaction with users such as policymakers – who were invited to the PhD course and made several of the presentations at the Nordic workshop and the meeting on impact case methods. We believe that it is fruitful in most cases to involve practitioners in the work of OSIRIS. The following is a list of larger-scale presentations for a more tailored user audience:

Magnus Gulbrandsen (2016), Forutsetninger for å ta forskning i bruk. NAVs kunnskapskonferanse, Oslo, 19. oktober.

Magnus Gulbrandsen (2017), Er det sammenheng mellom vitenskapelig kvalitet og samfunnsnytte? Kunnskapsgrunnlagkonferansen, Oslo, 1. mars 2017. A video of this talk is available here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqaGnryxHn0&list=PLvhR0FbIMLF CjZFrCuHZDDzh131NowJ5j&index=9&t=1s>

Magnus Gulbrandsen (2017), Hva får samfunnet igjen for forskning? Hva er betingelsene? Kunnskapsdepartementets sommerseminar, NIFU, 1. juni 2017.

Jordi Molas-Gallart (2016), Position Statement on the Societal Value of Science. Science Europe Symposium, Brussels, 17 October.

Jordi Molas-Gallart (2017), Inclusión y participación en la evaluación de políticas científicas y tecnológicas: función y límites. I Reunión de Servicios de Evaluación Científica en los Vice-Rectorados de Investigación ¿Qué necesitan nuestras universidades y gestores? Universidad de Granada, 26 October 2017.

Richard Woolley and Nicolás Robinson-García (2017), What do the 2014 REF results tell us about the relationship between excellent research and societal impact? OSIRIS/R-Quest policy seminar, Oslo, 1st November 2017.

In addition to the larger and open meetings, centre personnel has presented OSIRIS and/or been invited to give introductory or specialist lectures about the topic of “research impact” in various organisations. Many of the presentations are available at the [OSIRIS web page](#).