# Net 4 Society

# Increasing Impact!

## What is «Impact»?

«Impact» refers to all changes that are expected to happen due to a project's activities. Impacts may occur over different timescales, affect different type of actors, different scales (from local to European level), and different dimensions (e.g. societal, economic, academic impact). Examples are:

- *Societal impact* - social improvements e.g. via the use of project results by policy makers or other societal actors.

- *Academic impact* – impact on the academic community, e.g. by establishing new methodologies.

- *Economic impact* – e.g. creation of jobs, establishing new products or services, fostering economic growth

## Why is «Impact» important?

Horizon 2020 puts a strong focus on the impact of research. The programme aims at generating innovation and tackling societal challenges. «Impact» is one of three evaluation criteria in Horizon 2020. During evaluation, «Impact» is given an equal weight as scientific excellence. Projects are expected to integrate impact activities in their project design.

## «Impact» in Horizon 2020's Societal Challenge 6:

In SC6 «Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies» research is often led by Social Sciences and Humanities and impact is often generated through:

- Reframing of debates
- Change of mind-sets or practices
- Shaping of legislation

A pre-condition for impact are successful **dissemination** activities: the relevant target groups learn about the project results. Tools for effectively disseminating results can be:

- Publications such as Policy Briefs with recommendations
- Trainings
- Exhibitions
- Web-Tools (e.g. Apps)
- Workshops, e.g. science-policy dialogues

The second step on the way to achieving impact is **transference.** Transference means that relevant actors, e.g. policy makers, not only learn about project results, but actually apply them. Transference is facilitated when actors are involved in the project's activities in a process of **co-creation** of results.

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## How to improve the societal impact of your research?

### Involve stakeholders!

- Start with a thorough analysis of all relevant stakeholders – the potential users of your research. What are their needs, interests and potential role in the project? Ask yourself: Who might be interested in or affected by our research?
- Involve relevant stakeholders right from the start in the proposal phase – e.g. as consortium partners or advisory board members. Let their needs guide your research.
- Engage on a <u>structured</u> dialogue with stakeholders – to clarify intentions and understand agendas. It's not about uni-directional communication, but about two-way dialogues.
- Co-create results with stakeholders – make use of their non-academic knowledge as practitioners.

### What else?

- Define and communicate the key messages of your project.
- Constantly screen your project results for information of relevance for groups outside the project.
- Prioritize your target groups – since resources are limited, concentrate on those that promise to generate the most impact.
- Involve experienced knowledge brokers and create the position of an «Impact Manager» in your project - a person who ensures that the aspect of impact is taken into account in all project phases and activities.
- Communicate professionally; develop a virtual identity for your project.
- Do not forget to dedicate budget for the interaction with stakeholders and for activities aimed at creating impact.

### Describing impact in your Horizon 2020 proposal:

- Impact needs to be a central thread throughout your whole proposal – not only in Part 2 «Impact».
- Clearly explain your impact strategy: What impact do you want to achieve – and through which means? Be ambitious, but realistic.
- Be as concrete as possible about your target groups (the generic term «policy makers» is not enough!) and targeted activities for reaching them.
- How do you plan to measure your impact? Define indicators.

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**Further Info & Support:**

DANDELION  Promoting EU-funded projects
ACCOMPLISSH Platform for Impact of Social Sciences and Humanities
IMPACT-EV Evaluating the impact of EU SSH projects
EU Guide  on Project Communication

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