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Seminar: From Heritage to Horizon

Valuing societal impact in a civic university

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POLICY context societal impact of research:

Europe:

- Measuring only scientific excellence >> how research contributes to addressing societal challenges
- Demonstrate impact pathways in proposals
- Co-creation with citizens, policy makers, industry, and civil society >> actual uptake

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CIVIC university:

- Mission: Strengthening the region
  Societal engagement: Addressing grand challenges (sustainability, diversity,...).
- Regional integration: Education and research closely linked to regional needs and opportunities.
- Utilizing the region as a 'living lab' for education and research
- https://www.uhasselt.be/en/about-hasselt-university/civic-university

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Working group on societal impact of research

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Working group on societal impact of research

- Participatory approach
  - literature study
  - external interviews
  - internal case study’s

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GOAL

HOW TO STRUCTURALLY EMBED SOCIETAL IMPACT WITHIN HASSELT UNIVERSITY
by designing an ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL and an EVALUATION MODEL that align with UHasselt's societal impact AMBITIONS and civic mission

KEY QUESTIONS

- Which models and best practices exist for organizing and evaluating SI?
- What are the needs of UH's entities regarding SI?
- Which organizational and evaluation models are best suited for UH context?

A PARTICIPATORY DESIGN APPROACH: UHasselt as a central case

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

UNIVERSITY AS AGENT IN TRANSITION in constant dialogue with society
researchers (multiple domains), KTT managers, research managers, administrative depts, management team

PROCES

MAPPING	COMMONING	ENVISIONING	INSTITUTIONING
existing models and best practices internal & external	development of a shared language + fostering collective ownership of SI	conceptualizing potential organizational models	implementing a tailored **organization and evaluation model**

co-creation session

co-creation session

co-creation session

DESKTOP RESEARCH

literature study

FIELDWORK

interviews
documenting UH cases

NETWORK

setting up network with other universities and policy organizations that value SI

OUTPUTS

TOOL to map and visualize societal impact + COST NETWORK

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Towards a tailored model for SI: prototype of a tool



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Prototype of tool to model dimension of SI

Broad definition of SI:

- considerate, informed and responsible impact of scientific research on **multiple dimensions of society**
  - social
  - cultural
  - environmental
  - economic
  - health & well-being
  - policy & democracy
  - infrastructure

- affecting **human** actors and communities as well as **more-than-human** actors and ecosystems.

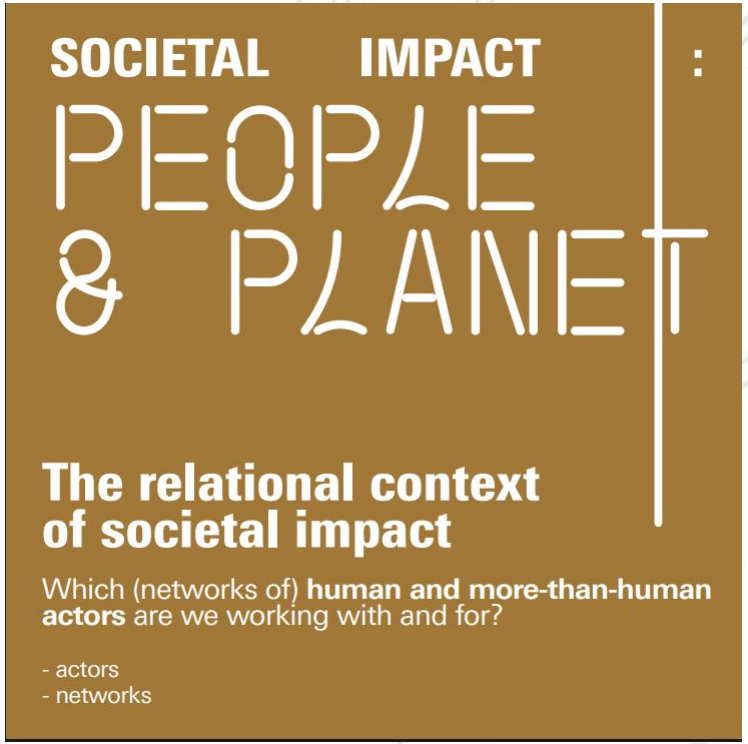


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Prototype of tool to model dimension of SI





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7Ps: Further developed based on The Civic Impact Framework by Dobson (2024)

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SOCIETAL IMPACT : PLACE & TIME

Concrete dimensions of societal impact

What is the **scale** of (envisioned) societal impact?

- *Time:* short - middle - long
- *Spatial:* local - regional - national - international
- *Direction:* university → society, society → university, both directions
- *Intensity:* depth/amount of change: informing - advising - implementing

SOCIETAL IMPACT : POLICY

Social impact as organisational policy

Which aspects of the **institutional context** enable universities and their researchers to prioritise societal impact?

- organizational mission
- organizational structures
- leadership organisation
- capability development
- internal services
- funding
- positioning in (international) research policy landscape

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Next steps

https://deanderemarkt.be/projects/52/tools/173

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Conclusions: from societal impact to Horizon Europe

- **Explore societal impact:** Use the 7 P's to reflect on different dimensions of societal impact.
- **Identify opportunities:** Explore how research can contribute to societal change and who should be involved.
- **Develop impact pathways:** Translate these reflections into concrete objectives, activities and expected outcomes.
- **Strengthen European proposals:** Use the toolkit to support the development of a credible impact strategy.

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Thank you!

More information?

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