

# *Research Councils UK Approaches to Impact Assessment*

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# Impact assessment: why?

- ***Public accountability:***
  - Research Councils invest public money
- ***Demonstrating achievements:***
  - Making the case for research funding
  - Changing funding landscape
- ***Dep't of Business Innovation & Skills Performance Management System:***
  - Reporting requirements: impact reports

# Impact assessment: what?

- ***Academic impact***

The demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to academic advances, across and within disciplines, including significant advances in understanding, methods, theory and application.

- ***Economic and societal impacts***

The demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy. Economic and societal impacts embrace all the extremely diverse ways in which research-related knowledge and skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations by:

- fostering global economic performance, and specifically the economic competitiveness of the United Kingdom,
- increasing the effectiveness of public services and policy,
- enhancing quality of life, health and creative output.

# Assessing impact: how?

## The role of the researcher (1)

*Individuals and groups funded by Research Councils should:*

- demonstrate an awareness of the wider environment and context in which their research takes place
- demonstrate an awareness of the social and ethical implications of their research, beyond usual research conduct considerations, and take account of public attitudes towards those issues
- engage actively with the public at both the local and national levels about their research and its broader implications
- identify potential benefits and beneficiaries from the outset, and through the full life cycle of the project(s)
- maintain professional networks that extend beyond their own discipline and research community

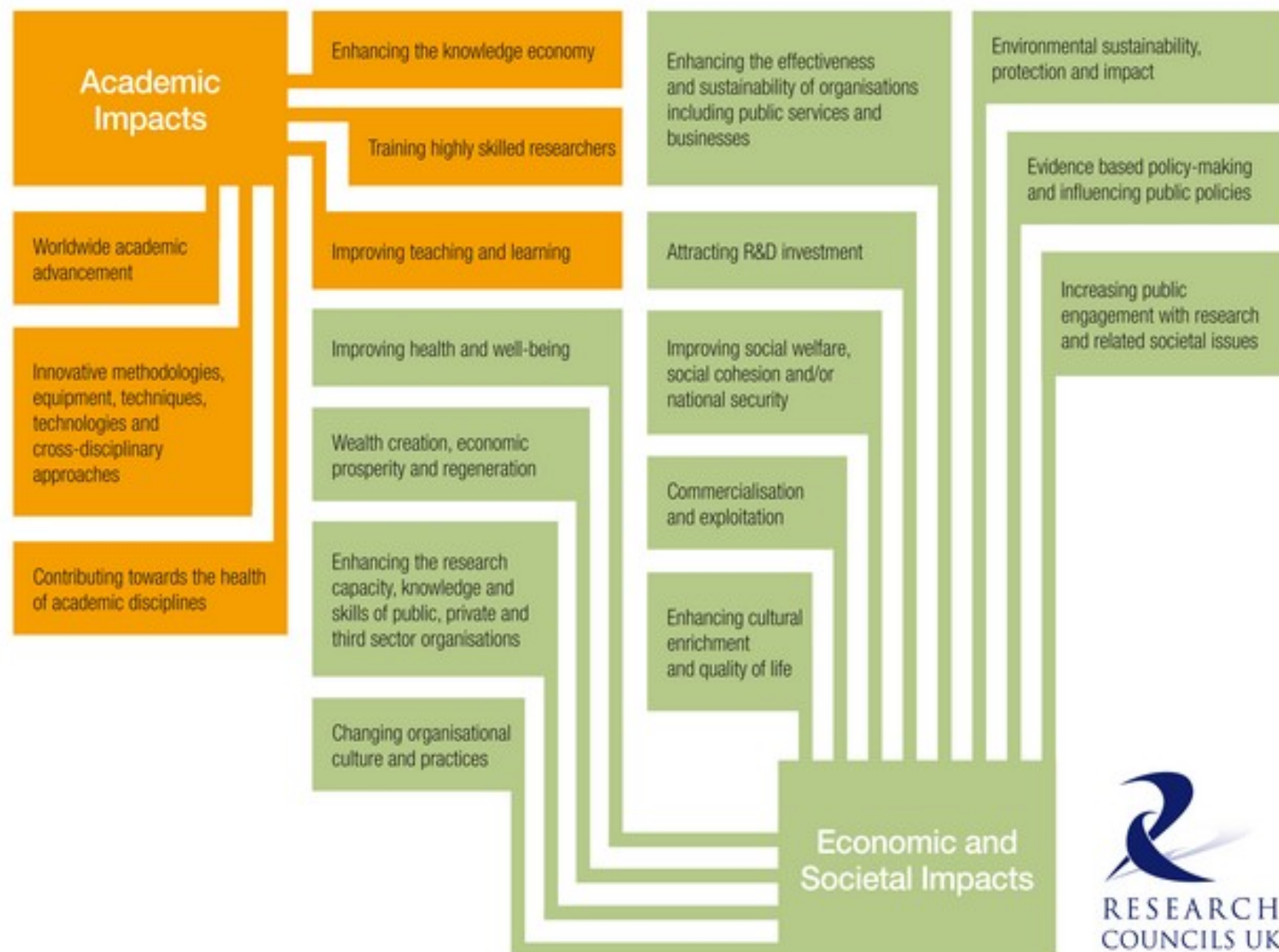
# Assessing impact: how?

## The role of the researcher (2)

*Individuals and groups funded by Research Councils should:*

- publish results widely – considering academics, user and public audiences for research outcomes
- exploit results where appropriate, to secure social and economic return to the UK
- manage collaborations professionally, to secure maximum impact without restricting the future progression of research
- ensure that research staff and students develop research, vocational and entrepreneurial skills that are matched to the demands of their future career paths
- take responsibility for the curation, management and exploitation of data for future use
- work in partnership with us for the benefit of the UK

# Pathways to Impact



# Assessing impact: how?

## Capturing evidence

- ***Current Research Council systems:***
  - *e-Val (MRC, STFC)*
  - *ROD (NERC)*
  - *ROS (AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC)*

# Assessing impact: how?

## ROS (1)

- Data for evaluating programmes/activities and demonstrating impact (academic, economic and societal) from RC investments
- Developed jointly by AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC and ESRC and available to universities and grant holders
- System features: bulk upload from university RMI systems, automatic look-up, data gathered on an on-going basis, developing interoperability with other systems



# Assessing impact: how?

## ROS (2)

- Publications
- Other Research Outputs
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Exploitation
- Recognition
- Staff Development
- Further Funding
- ***Impact***



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## Research Outcomes System

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# Tools for impact assessment

- Drawing on strong research evaluation traditions
  - Peer review; data analysis; surveys; logic approaches
- Treasury “Green Book” economic impact analyses eg BBSRC institute studies
- Case studies: RCUK examples from working with India:
  - Boosting oilseed crops; Faster vaccine development; Biomass use; A voice for the poor; the changing state of clothing; malnutrition fuels poverty cycle; Indian monsoon and climate change; Oceanography partnerships; X-raying the moon; The smoking epidemic; Mumbai: liquid city; Taking rural India on-line
- Increasing focus on policy impact
- Outline tool-kit of methodologies and approaches from meta-evaluation (RCUK Policy Fellow)

# Combining existing techniques

- Macro-economic analysis + case studies
- Green book analysis + contemporary history
- Integrating academic and consultancy expertise
- Meta-evaluation across evaluation types
- Case studies + indicators
  - RC Impact Reports

# Using impact assessments

- Reporting to government:
  - Formally to BIS, through annual impact reports
  - On-going examples of impact, achievements and successes for:
    - Briefing for Ministers and BIS officials
    - Responses to parliamentary reports and PQs
    - Input to BIS presentations and publications
    - Q&As for press releases
    - Input to consultations
- Reporting beyond government
  - Working with the research community
  - Working with other funders
  - Reporting to the public

**Thank you**

**Questions?**