



WORK PACKAGE 3: DEVELOPMENT of SYSTEM OF THE ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT & QUALITY OF RESEARCH

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A. Reflection of Existing System of Assessing Research Performance

In overall, there are variations in evaluation of research performance across all partner and program countries' institutions. All institutions involved have specific assessments for both institutions and individuals. The following describes further on some lessons that we learned from each program and partner universities based on our earlier framework of looking into a) research input (sources of funds to conduct research projects, b) research output (publications) c) other related contextual practices.

From an overall perspective, most consortium members rely on a *national evaluation systems* in assessing and improving excellence in research for individual researchers and institutions. Basically, these are UK, France, Slovakia and Malaysia (UoB, UCL, UEBA, UMB, UTM and UiTM.). Each of the system has its strengths from both aspects of quantitative and qualitative criteria. In addition, the *national evaluation systems* also depict a clear link between aspects of research input and research output or vice versa. In some contexts, the public funds vested for research are expected to generate not only citation impacts but also development for science and socio-economic facets.

In terms of *research input*, (sources of funds to perform research projects), program universities depend on both national (country-based), regional (EU) and international grants (Erasmus+). From the mapping of current practices, we found that in some specific contexts, a provision of grants/funding is also based on the achievement of publications in high-ranking journals. With the intensity and trends toward innovation and development that directly reflect impacts to society, demands for more funds to support blue-skies research may not be as high as translational research in the context of SEA. Stakeholders of the government in this region look for benefits for the society in the funding spent on research, while simultaneously demand researchers to also be salient in international journals, conferences and linkages. For Indonesia and Thailand, research funding by the government agencies and industry are moving upward, while Malaysia is currently showing a downward trend. To illustrate, UII not only could seek grants from the public funding, but also gain funding support from its Foundation Body (Badan Wakaf Islam). On the other hand, the issue of underfunding in Malaysia leads its researchers to explore international grants from various parts of the world.

In terms of *research output*, an utmost lesson we gained from this mapping exercise is that Poland, France and the UK have their own journal ranking. In particular to partner countries, Thailand has the TCI (Thai-journal citation index) since 2001 as a pathway to enhance visibility of its local and national research findings. Malaysia, on the other hand, "pegs" on other well-developed nations' journal rankings. Currently, MyCite (Malaysian Citation Centre) only functions to control the bibliographic and citation information of Malaysian journals. However, Malaysia has yet to build its own journal ranking. Likewise, this is also the case for Indonesia. The practice of having a national journal ranking such as those in the program countries' institutions is probably something which SEA universities may want to develop as it reflects institutional confidence in determining the academic destiny while staying align with the national or regional (ASEAN) growth focus.

Another distinct feature that we see in our current analysis is the separate assessment used for different areas of knowledge. To illustrate, UoB and UMB have different assessment for economics, engineering, arts and humanities etc. Meanwhile in Malaysia, the same scale of research assessment (MyRA: Malaysia Research Assessment) are being imposed to all types of universities, namely research and teaching institutions. There is also lack of standards and clarity in defining how social sciences/arts and humanities researchers should be evaluated. It leads research groups within this knowledge area to be assessed according to their engineering and sciences peers. For Thailand and Indonesia, we have yet to see a national scale of research assessment being practiced.

From the mapping exercise, SEA institutions could learn greatly from program countries institutions' *contextual practices*. From UMB, we could learn on the significance of material stimulation (in the form of incentives) in enhancing their critical mass of researchers. We are also inspired by the French impactful system of evaluation

particularly for individual researchers in the sense that such a metric could be utilized in determining sabbatical, promotions and supervision of doctoral students. Furthermore, in our part of the world (SEA), we have yet to fully consider and endeavour the altmetric system as a way to evaluate research performance of both individual and institutions. Hence, we are impressed and inspired by SGH-Poland that mentioned this in its current practices. The evaluation on researchers' websites, blogs, twitter, counts of views, downloads, shares and posts can be a source of measuring impacts as it can be related to issues of scientific innovation, policymaking and reflect the communication between researchers and stakeholders within a specific society. Having mentioned this, partner countries would also like to learn from the UK REF in how to develop measurement for specified impacts "that have provided benefits to one or more areas of culture, the economy, the environment, health, public policy and services, quality of life, or society, whether locally, nationally or internationally".

B. Development of a Better Future System of Research Performance for SEA.

In terms of moving ahead, it is pragmatic to adopt from various best practices of existing systems of Research Assessment. It is timely that we learn from program countries on how to evaluate research performance from a realistic quantitative angle. In addition, it is also crucial that SEA institutions consider qualitative angle of the measurement as a way to enhance the performance of both research inputs and outputs as well as issues of critical mass (of researchers and doctoral students). Hence, it would be a sustainable move to develop a hybrid system that values both quantitative and qualitative criteria. Learning from REF and Universitas 21, we sense a need to understand the process of doing impact case study. How each research grants provided by any sources of funding could benefit industry, society and government (through innovation-based outputs, policy making and implementation)? Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand would like to learn on how outputs of any research could be beneficial for the industry and communities particularly because all the three countries are working toward further national development through innovation. Hence, improving the current system of assessing research input and output that will lead to rapid uptake by the industry or generate socio-economic impact to the community is worth working for. In a nutshell, Figure 1 depicts the areas/sections which we can consider in the development of SAIQoR (System of Assessment of Impact and Quality of Research Performance) for SEA.

Figure 1: Proposed Framework for System of Assessment of Impact and Quality of Research Performance) for SEA

