

CARDIFF Statement

Optimising the Societal Impact of Social Sciences and Humanities

In recent years, ways of better demonstrating the societal impact of research have been developed, for example by the 2014 REF assessment in the UK. In the same year the [Leiden Statement](#) stressed the importance of the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) as academic disciplines; a statement which was supported by the globe's leading networks of research universities. In this context, we had three objectives in organizing an international conference to substantiate and discuss both processes: the first is to restate and champion the fundamental role that the social sciences and humanities play in society and the second is to call for an expanded role for the social sciences and humanities in tackling problems through interdisciplinary research. Third, and most importantly, our event, which was held in Cardiff, 20-21 September 2017, brought together the SSH research community in order to promote an international and collaborative approach to developing and engaging ways to optimize the societal impact of that research. We see the enormous potential for SSH research to benefit society and this event brought together internationally-leading contributors to this agenda.

The social science and humanities community, along with research institutions and funders, have become more sophisticated in supporting and tracking impact across society. Together with our stakeholders, new consortia, methods and mechanisms have been developed to generate more visible impact for our partners. That said, there are a number of areas where further progress is needed. As a community of researchers, partners and users of research, we need to articulate better and demonstrate more powerfully our impacts. We need to do more to link the supply-side for production of evidence and expertise to the demands and priorities of society. And we need to extend and deepen our collaboration with other research disciplines. The Cardiff event will provide an opportunity for key contributors to come together and share their experiences.

In order to galvanise researchers and their societal partners to optimise impact, we strongly recommend the following instruments:

- ✓ Promote societal challenges as the catalyst for high quality, impact focussed research programmes;
- ✓ Create consortia with practice and across disciplines in the earliest phase of research planning, and to foster co-development of research programs;
- ✓ Involve government (on all levels), third sector, business and cultural institutes as a co-producer of research;
- ✓ Create data-partnerships with citizens, business, third sector and public partners;
- ✓ Facilitate entrepreneurship within SSH where possible;
- ✓ Develop metrics that support evaluation and demonstration of impact of SSH;
- ✓ Promote and support Innovation and impact that produces value of various forms, including economic but also social, cultural and wider public value;
- ✓ Stimulate interdisciplinary research with other scientific disciplines;
- ✓ Develop and implement academic reward systems and structures which incentivises societal impact;
- ✓ Enable and encourage sharing of best practice and lessons learned between researchers and research users;
- ✓ Share our latest insights with as many citizens as possible.

Our further aspiration is that the Cardiff conference heralds the beginning of a movement that will work together on how the impact of SSH research can be supported and extended. We see international collaboration as central to this endeavour.

Designed for the **“Boosting Impact of Social Sciences and Humanities”** conference
in Cardiff on September 21, 2017.

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