

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AS **STAKEHOLDERS IN CO-CREATION, COMMUNICATION AND USE OF RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE**

International associations as non-profit organisations (NPO) and research and development (R&D) organisations share a baseline mission of promoting societal value and enhancing human wellbeing. Traditionally they operated in own comfort zones with so-called altruistic and/or charitable organisations, on the one hand, and academia, on the other hand. Both sectors have been tipping into significant public and private financial resources.



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The changing global landscape under which NPO and academia are operating today is bringing about increased awareness of the added value of blending knowledge, skills and competences from the research domain with non-academic and non-formalized knowledge that comes from relevant societal actors including NPO. Another change is the increasing acknowledgement of the necessity for interdisciplinary and international approaches both in research and in activism. Transnational research is needed to address the supra-national challenges.

Transnational cooperation and transnational actions are needed to alleviate intended and unintended consequences of human abuse and mishaps, and man-made and natural disasters that know no borders.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN RESEARCH

Quest for evidence of social impact and return of investment into knowledge-based society favour participatory methodologies. This is pursuit of co-production of new knowledge based on experience, learning from others, and drawing on the knowledge of the participants for capturing the key insights. Experience that the participants bring is valorised through sharing of insights and dialogue.

The expected impact from co-production of knowledge is to contribute to closing the gap between science, policy makers and society. It is assumed that coproduction of knowledge will contribute to more widespread uptake of knowledge and effective solutions to problems.

In this new landscape International Associations as gatekeepers of knowledge about practices worldwide become invaluable partners in contributing to

generating relevant evidence that can go beyond suggesting actions that can be copied. International Associations have the knowledge to address the challenge of identifying needs for possible and desirable adaptations and are powerful multipliers of knowledge.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN DISSEMINATION, EXPLOITATION AND COMMUNICATION

Quest for stakeholder involvement in research goes hand in hand with tailoring communication tools to target stakeholders and also their involvement in discussions about research outputs and the uptake.

A challenge, which research community and International Association share, relates to communication strategies, plans and actions. The key questions may be summarised as follows. How do you tell others about your achievements? How do you harvest reactions to your achievement from the "relevant others"? How do you create added value of engaging stakeholders in a meaningful conversation?

International Associations as powerful multipliers of knowledge can pick up some hints from expectations of funding agencies towards the research



community. Understanding the new context of requirements for research funding can help International Associations to forge their place and access funding as knowledge users and knowledge providers. The, "Dissemination & exploitation" section of the H2020 Online Manual details :

- ▶ Dissemination is the public disclosure of the results in any medium. It is a process of promotion and awareness raising right from the beginning of a project. It makes research results known to various stakeholder groups (like research peers, industry and other commercial actors, professional organisations, policymakers) in a targeted way, to enable them to use the results in their own work.
- ▶ Exploitation is the use of the results during and after the project's implementation. It can be for commercial purposes but also for improving policies, and for tackling economic and societal problems.
- ▶ Communication means taking strategic and targeted measures for promoting the action itself and its results to a multitude of audiences, including the media and the public, and possibly engaging in a two-way exchange.

The approach to communication as a driver of positive change, focus on communicating with rather than communicating to, and tailoring of content for different stakeholders, wide opens the door to International Associations to partake in research projects and access research funds.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Examples of funding opportunities in partnership with research organisations are numerous. Some key EU actions are:

HORIZON 2020 research framework programme covers funding of research during the 2014-2020 period. Within the research vision of reaching out to the global world there is greater space for non-formal and informal knowledge providers such as International Associations.

Of particular relevance are specific instrument/ actions such as HORIZON 2020 Coordination and Support Action (CA and SA) under various societal challenges, and HORIZON 2020 Science with and for Society (Swafs) .

Relevant are also dedicated actions. Some were launched through the work programme in 2010 that included a topic for Latin America and Caribbean (LAC), and Specific International Cooperation action (SICA) for China. Both build on strong SSH input as they relate to social and economic uses of environment in LAC countries and urbanisation trends and processes in China.

Not to be overlooked is Networking and knowledge sharing by means of European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST). COST is the longest running European intergovernmental network for cooperation in research and technology.

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