RI-PATHS: Charting Impact Pathways of Investments in Research Infrastructures

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Challenges in impact assessment

- Most **challenging traits of assessing** the socio-economic impact of RI and of science in a broader sense

  - intangible nature of benefits

  - their long timespan

  - their high uncertainty (especially in relation to the probability of breakthrough scientific discoveries)

  - related risks

  - high occurrence of externalities and spill-over effects

Current situation

- **Several** impact assessment **approaches** exist

  - Ad hoc modelling and forecasting exercises, tailored to the uniqueness of the unit of analysis and often focusing on specific type of impacts, rather than drawing from more comprehensive conceptual frameworks

- A question remains: Is it possible and sensible to **have a more systemic view on the relationships between the impacts**?

  - Especially interested to account for the time-scale of impact diffusion and their cumulative effects

  - Move from simple ex-post detection of intended/ unintended returns of RIs to a better understanding and planning of future investment

Project in a nutshell

- Coordination and Support Action project

- Funded under H2020-INFRASUPP-2016-2017 (Support to policy and international cooperation)

- Duration: 24 months

- Kick-off: January 2018

Objective

To develop **a logical model** in a **participatory co-design** manner engaging RIs and other stakeholders in making explicit their assumptions and elaborating the logical chains in how they see various socio-economic impacts emerge and diffuse over time and across boundaries

Model for IA of RI – key highlights

- Developed in **consecutive stages** in a **participatory co-design manner**

  - Participatory workshops for charting, contesting and validating impact pathways and respective KPIs

  - Project design ensures space for continuous feedback loops

- **Broad consultation** of RIs (ensured through MERIL database) and relevant organisations at national, European and global level (Advisory Board)

  - Ensure applicability to all types of RIs and cover all areas of research

  - Integrate perspectives from research performers, policy makers and funders

Project concept
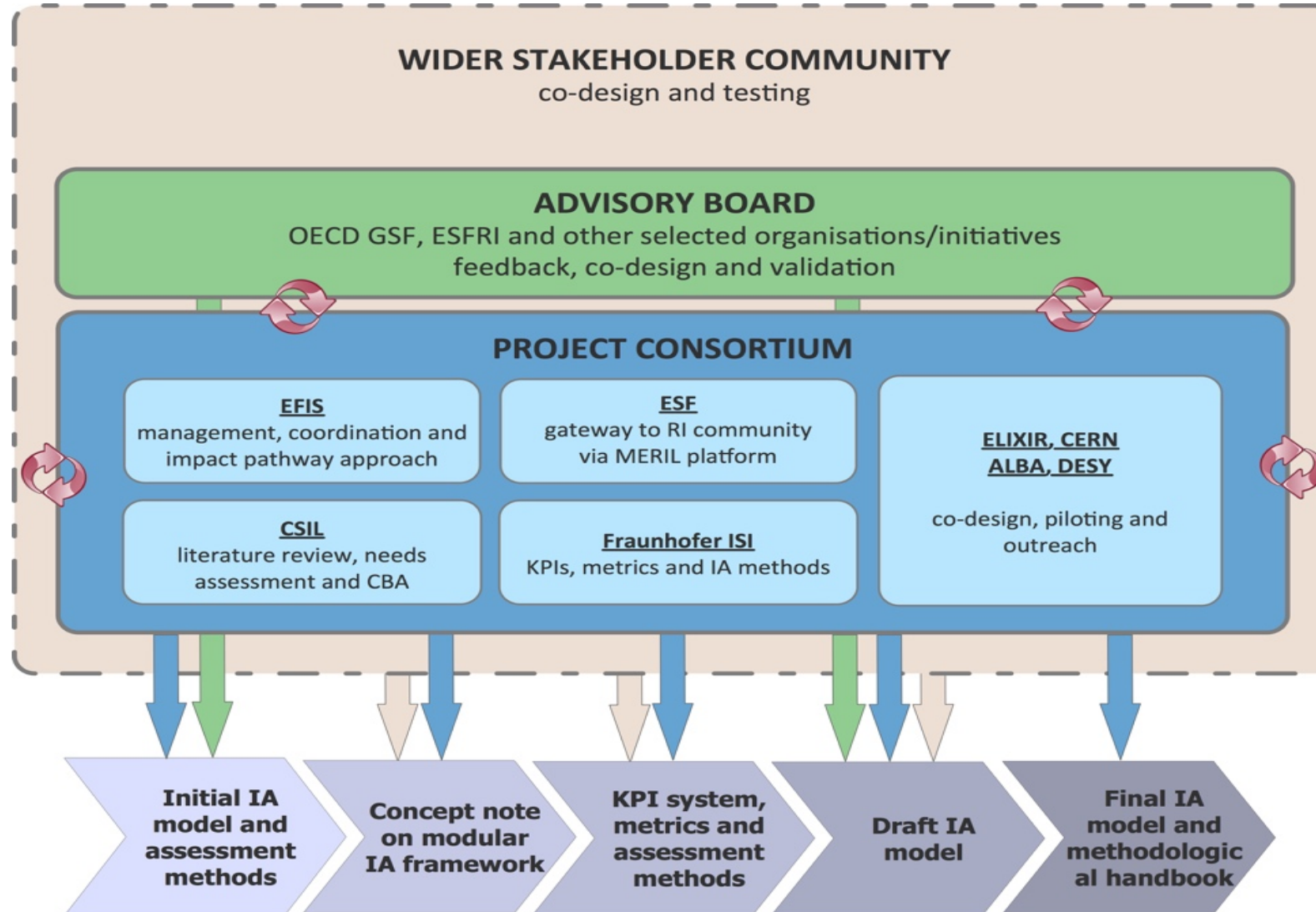
Model for IA of RI – key highlights

- IA model is developed using a **modular approach** – a generic core model and more detailed sub-models

- The model reflects the **whole lifecycle of RI development**

- **Systemic perspective** is applied; attention on the **interrelations and complementarities** between various impact pathways

- Emphasis is put on the **pertinence, validity and feasibility** of the developed model

Modular approach

- Help reflect the specificities of the analysis under **different angles**

  - typologies of RIs, their scale and scope, timing of the evaluation, role of the assessment in the decision-making process, depth of the analysis

- A core module and additional components

  - A **core module** will provide the minimum 'must-have' ingredients to perform a 'light' impact assessment based on a set of common KPIs

  - **Additional components** can be added to provide more in-depth insights and more full-fledged analysis

- Will include a system of rules and procedures suggesting which modules are relevant depending on the information needs

Model for IA of RI – key highlights

- Impacts are expressed in **quantifiable** and, where possible, also **monetary terms**

- The tailored set of KPIs and integration of the project outcomes with MERIL-2 Advanced Data module contributes to a **concrete toolbox for policy making**

- Testing the applicability of the logical model and piloting concrete data gathering efforts with partner RIs, enhances the **operationalisation of the conceptual tool**

- **A web-based application** enables the practical use of the modular IA

Operationalisation of the IA model

- Pilot impact assessments for specific areas of impact collaborating with selected research infrastructures that represent diverse types of RIs.

  - Inputs and feedback from **various types of RIs** – during participatory workshops and testing of the model logic

  - **Broaden the sample of the piloting RIs.** An open call for expression of interest to specifically those type of RIs that project team judges to be underrepresented for formulating a comprehensive IA model.

- If **you are interested to provide input, test and validate** the model, let's talk! Work to start in October 2018 and run through 2019

Thank you!
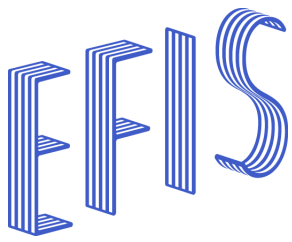
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Project structure