

ACUMEN

academic careers understood through measurement and norms

FP7 Grant Agreement | 266632

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Author(s)	Sybille Hinze, Gunnar Sivertsen, and Ismael Rafols

Project Website | <http://research-acumen.eu/>

European Commission
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EUROPEAN
COMMISSION



TECHNICAL REVIEW REPORT

Grant Agreement number: 266632

Project Acronym: ACUMEN

Project title: Academic Careers Understood through Measurement and Norms

Funding Scheme: FP7 (7th Framework Programme)
SP4 - Capacities
Science in Society 2012

Project starting date: March 1st 2011

Project duration: 36 months

Name of the scientific representative of the project's coordinator and organisation: Prof. Paul Wouters

Project web site: <http://research-acumen.eu/>

Type of technical review:

Periodic regular/foreseen technical review

Unforeseen Technical Review

Period covered by the technical review report, from January 2012 to March 2013

Date and place of review meeting (if applicable): ACUMEN workshop, 6-8 March 2013, RSLIS Copenhagen.

Name(s) of expert(s):

- Sybille Hinze
- Gunnar Sivertsen
- Ismael Rafols

Name of expert(s) drafting the **consolidated report**:

- Sybille Hinze
- Gunnar Sivertsen
- Ismael Rafols

Name of the Project Officer: Daniel Spichtinger

1. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

a. Executive summary

Comments, in particular highlighting the scientific/technical achievements of the project, its contribution to the State of the Art and its impact:

The project's objective is threefold. It aims to 1) gain a better understanding of the evaluation processes, criteria used therein and resulting effects, that individual researchers are facing in the pursue of an academic career. 2) It sets out to develop more appropriate guidelines and information sources taking into account the multidimensionality of scientific / academic activities, which can be applied in individual evaluation processes. And 3) it aims to develop a portfolio reflecting researchers' careers and experiences by enabling researchers to provide adequate evidence with regard to their development and activities to date.

In the first period the project gathered evidence with regard to the evaluation processes implemented, the criteria applied, information and data used in these evaluation and gathered evidence on the impact these procedures have on researchers' careers. The final part of the process brings this evidence together for the creation of a framework on how to build a personal research portfolio.

Originally the focus was directed towards assessing existing and developing new indicators to reflect upon researchers' performance in different dimensions, in particular taking into account new web-based information sources. Based on the literature reviews and first interview rounds the focus of the project seems to have shifted away from this primarily quantitative approach towards more emphasis in a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative evidence. Such shift reflects a broader trend in bibliometrics away from narrow quantitative approaches towards mixed methods.

In addition, more attention is now given to the researchers themselves as providers of information for their evaluation. Seeing the researcher in an active role may represent a limitation with regard to the types of external information that could otherwise be provided for the evaluation if the researchers were not involved, e.g. indicators developed by experts and based on not readily available but frequently updated macro data.

The project seems to be making progress, though in an unequal manner, with some WPs a bit delayed (in part due to administrative problems that have now been resolved) and with some challenges regarding their integration in WP6. The project has a very interesting and ambitious research agenda. Hence the shifts in approach and problems of integration encountered also reflect the difficulty of the challenges addressed.

- Excellent progress (the project has fully achieved its objectives and technical goals for the period or has even exceeded expectations).
- Good progress (the project has achieved most of its objectives and technical goals for the period with relatively minor deviations).

Acceptable progress (the project has achieved some of its objectives; however, some corrective action will be required)

Unsatisfactory progress (the project has failed to achieve critical objectives and/or is not at all on schedule).

- b. Overall recommendations (e.g. on overall modifications, corrective actions at WP level, or re-tuning the objectives to optimise the impact or keep up with the State of the Art, or for other reasons, like best use of resources, re-focusing...).

2. OBJECTIVES and WORKPLAN

- a. Progress towards project objectives: Have the objectives for the period been achieved? In particular, has the project as a whole been making satisfactory progress in relation to the Description of Work (Annex I to the grant agreement)?:

Partially

Comments

An assessment of the detailed achievements of the individual work packages is difficult as the reviewers were provided with the general progress report but not detailed results achieved in the WPs. The meeting the reviewers attended was not focussing on presenting results from the WPs either but rather as a developmental stage for the portfolio the projects sets out to develop. From the plenary discussions and group work, however, it was possible to get the impression of partial progress, with different degree of progress in different WPs.

- b. Progress in individual work packages: Has each work package (WP) been making satisfactory progress in relation to the Description of Work (Annex I of the grant agreement)?

Partially

Comments

Again, the results of the WPs were not presented directly. The impression (see the general comment above) was partial progress. In some instances, we noted lack of progress, e.g. how to solve the problem of using in advanced citation indicators in contexts of individual evaluations where the individuals are to provide or approve of and understand the indicators themselves.

- c. Milestones and deliverables: Have planned milestones and deliverables been achieved for the reporting period?

Partially

The following deliverable were due in the review period

DELIVERABLES LIST STATUS			
No.	Title	Suggested Actions (To be Approved/Rejected)	Remarks
	Portfolio model		Still not finished, workshop was organized as brainstorming event feeding into the development of the portfolio
	Review event	Approved	Review took place as part of the consortium meeting on March 6 and 7 2013

- d. Relevance of the objectives in the coming periods: Are the objectives for the coming period(s) i) still relevant and ii) still achievable within the time and resources available to the project?

The objectives are still relevant and achievable.

Comments

Originally the focus was directed towards assessing existing and developing new indicators based on new web-based information to reflect upon researchers' performance in dimensions. Based on the literature reviews and first interview rounds the focus of the project seems to have shifted from this quantitative approach towards a more mixed approach combining quantitative evidence with qualitative evidence. However, the objectives of creating a research portfolio are still relevant and remain in place. It seems conceivable that the group will be able to generate a research portfolio framework by the end of the project.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

a. Management: Has the project management been performed as required?

Yes

Comments

During the first year of the project administrative problems occurred regarding one of the partner organisations. The management clarified matters with the organisation and rearranged assignments and responsibilities within the project taking into account changes in the personnel assigned to the project in order to ensure that all WPs could be followed with the workforce needed.

b. Collaboration between beneficiaries: Has the collaboration between the beneficiaries been effective?

Partially

Comments

From what the reviewers could see during the consortium meeting, there is a good atmosphere and an efficient interaction between the partners.

However, there seems to be yet a lack of coherence between WP 1 to WP 5 and WP 6. The results from WP1 to WP 5 needs to be brought together in a manner that is more tailored towards the final objective of the project developed in WP6, namely the creation of a framework for a research portfolio. So far the objectives defined at the individual WP level seem to be dominating. Coherently integrating them in WP 6 should be more intensely pursued. For this purpose, we believe that WPs outcomes would improve if all the partners follow more closely the lead of the project coordinators, who are leading WP6

c. Beneficiaries' roles: Do you identify evidence of underperforming beneficiaries, lack of commitment or change of interest of any beneficiaries?

No

Comments

No general problem became obvious during the review. Also the coordinator confirmed that none of the parties involved is lacking commitment or interest. However, due to the lay out of the workshop reviewers did not get direct insight into the progress and results of the individual work packages.

5. USE AND DISSEMINATION OF FOREGROUND

- a. Impact: Is there evidence that the project has/will produce significant scientific, technical, commercial, social, or environmental impacts (where applicable)?

Comments

The potential impact remains to be seen. The objective of the project is certainly highly relevant but also very ambitious. The project addresses a very complex issue, tackling wide ranging interests and a large group of stakeholders, at the institutional, national and international level.

Whether the results will or will not be implemented by relevant stakeholders will depend on their acceptance of the final framework. In order to gain this acceptance these stakeholders need to be engaged already at an early stage. The actions foreseen so far (stakeholder workshop and graduate student workshop) in the project to address these stakeholders might not be sufficient to create momentum and acceptance among relevant parties.

The main challenge for this project, seen from the point of view of implementation (even if implementation is not part of the scope) is its relation to and contact with the organizations, practices, instruments, templates and information sources and information systems that are actually involved in evaluation of individual researchers on all levels in Europe. Norms, guidelines, and standard formats already exist, and possible alternatives need to be discussed with the stakeholders, who are mainly funding organizations and research institutions.

- b. Dissemination: Have the beneficiaries disseminated project results and information adequately (publications, conferences...)?

Yes, but so far primarily directed towards in the scientific community. A stronger focus on actors in charge of evaluation procedures should be addressed.

Comments

- c. Please identify potential information that should be disseminated to:

- Policy makers
- The scientific community
- The general public
- A specific group of end users

- d. Involvement of potential users and stakeholders: Are potential users and other stakeholders (outside the consortium) suitably involved (if applicable)?

No

Comments

So far potential users are not heavily involved. Their involvement is foreseen at the end of the project in form of two workshops, a graduate student workshop and a stakeholders' workshop.

At the Copenhagen meeting potential users were involved in the sense that a very first testing of the envisaged portfolio was presented to two scientists and their points of views on completeness and suitability were collected, which will feed in further fine-tuning the tool.

- f. Links with other projects and/or programmes: Is the consortium interacting in a satisfactory manner with other related Framework Programme projects and/or other R&D national/international programmes, standardisation bodies (if relevant), existing relevant networks?

Comments

Not obvious to the reviewers.

6. OTHER ISSUES

If applicable comment on whether other relevant issues (e.g. ethical, policy-related/regulatory, safety and gender issues) have been handled appropriately.

Comments

The consortium meeting was very well organised. All members of the consortium appeared to be very interested in the project. The working atmosphere was very stimulating.

7. FLAG THE PROJECT

- Highlight as a success/case story
 - High visibility/media attractive project
 - Substantial R&D breakthrough character
 - Project linked to R&D national/international programmes
 - Project with an impact on EU policies (click on which EU policy: http://ec.europa.eu/policies/index_fr.htm)
 - Project with an impact on promoting Joint Programming (especially for ERA-NET)
 - Outstanding Use/Exploitation of results
 - Significant R&D participation from outside EU
 - Involvement of non-RTD actors in the field (economic, policy makers, civil society, end-users, standardisation bodies...)
 - Good innovation potential
- X No Flag
- Other

Comments

Name (s) of the expert(s): Sybille Hinze, Ismael Rafols, Gunnar Sivertsen

Date: 18 March 2013

Signature(s):