

# DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DST)

Innovation for Inclusive Development (IID) Policy Seminar

## RESEARCH IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES:

IMPLICATIONS FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT



The IID Seminars are intended to ensure that research and evidence feed into active policy processes, and serve as a vehicle for disseminating policy-relevant research results, sharing expertise and experience, facilitating policy dialogue, and building the capacity of researchers and policymakers in ways that allow for public policymaking. According to the DST's IID Strategic Framework document, the post-apartheid development agenda is driven by policies that recognise that innovation is key for national growth, competitiveness and in addressing the challenges of inequality, poverty and unemployment (DST, n.d.).

Furthermore, South Africa is committed to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that United Nations (UN) member states aim to achieve by the year 2030. Goal 9 in particular focuses on building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and fostering innovation (UNDP, 2015). Within this context, innovation is enabled and advanced by a responsive and integrated science, knowledge and technology infrastructure. Despite not being explicitly stated, the integration of innovation in realizing the inclusive development goals, i.e. innovation for inclusive development (IID), became a focus area.

With this in mind, DST contracted the Research and Impact Assessment Unit (RIA) at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to organise a series of IID Seminars. The seminars will aim to inform and influence policymakers as well as facilitate access to leading thinkers drawn from government, academia, industry experts and active practitioners. The objectives of the IID policy seminars are to:

- Disseminate scientific research findings and transmit a body of new knowledge through an iterative process of critical dialogue and collegial critique.
- Provide an arena for the dissemination of knowledge, evidence and data on IID.
- Help educate the Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy and development communities about IID.
- Discuss the contributions of IID to the macroeconomic context and policy environment in South Africa linking the debates to major STI policy interventions as well as the National Development Plan (NDP).
- Examine, including through comparative perspectives, policy measures and interventions in the field of IID.
- Reinforce the visibility of IID research and policy implications.
- Enhance wider public understanding of the IID concept including the value and status of both individual and team-based research on IID.

### Background

The advent of Open Science brought to the fore a renewed discussion about Research Impact Assessment.

The recently published Draft White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation that Cabinet approved on 5 September 2018 for public comment (Government Gazette, 2018) draws attention to the significant opportunities that Open Science and Open Innovation represent for growing science, technology and innovation (STI) output and impact.

For so many decades knowledge, scientific output, and critical research data, were entrenched behind very expensive publications – available to only a small percentage of esteemed academics. Research impact assessment particularly in the Social Sciences is a contentious issue, discussed on various levels of society. Governments support research and innovation in priority sectors. The impact of contributions by high-tech manufacturing and –technologies such as robotics and artificial intelligence can be easily assessed, but the role of services, challenges of productivity, inclusive growth, etc. are less clear. To achieve tangible impact on policy and practice is not easy. Peer review is still regarded as the primary basis for evaluating research outputs, proposals and individuals. Development worldwide focus on evidence-based assessments, with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In the United Kingdom, policy was formulated as early as 1993, which advocated that the benefits of scientific research be applied to society. This thinking led to the development of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in 2006, and later the REF 2014. These Frameworks underlined the importance of a combined approach, bringing on board the importance of reporting impact through case studies. James Wilsdon (Wilsdon, 2016) emphasized that carefully selected indicators can complement decision-making, but a 'variable geometry' of expert judgement, quantitative indicators and qualitative measures that respect research diversity will be required.

The recommendation of the 2012 Ministerial Review Committee for the development of a strategic framework for IID strategy that prioritises impact assessment and evaluation (Ministerial Review Committee Report, n.d.) further underscores the importance of open science and impact assessment within the context of IID.

**19 February 2019**

CSIR International Convention  
Centre, Pretoria

**Programme:**

**RESEARCH IMPACT  
ASSESSMENT IN THE  
SOCIAL SCIENCES AND  
HUMANITIES:**

IMPLICATIONS FOR  
INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

- 08:00 Registration (Coffee / refreshments)
- 09:00 DST: Welcome
- 09:05 Prof Crain Soudien: Introduction
- 09:25 Keynote: Prof Salim Abdool Karim
- 10:00 Discussion
- 10:15 Prof Nelius Boshoff
- 10:45 Discussion
- 11:00 Tea break
- 11:15 Prof O.B Onyancha
- 11:45 Discussion
- 12:00 Lunch
- 13:00 Panel discussion – Chair: Prof L Simbayi:  
Dr Glenda Kruss  
Dr Heidi van Rooyen  
Andiswa Mfengu  
Dr Stephen Rule  
Prof Charles Hongoro
- 14:00 Closure / Word of thanks  
Prof Crain Soudien
- 15:00 Departure



**Aims**

This Seminar on Research Impact Assessment in the Social Sciences and Humanities aims to guide decisions in this regard by the HSRC and in the broader Social Science and Humanities' research sector. Through rigorous debate, we hope to achieve meaningful guidance that might direct strategic decisions moving forward.

The impact of social science and humanities' research needs to be positioned within the Open Science debate.

Various approaches to impact assessment will be interrogated, to enable the Council to frame the concept of social science and humanities' research impact assessment.

Numbers of publications, citations counts, and various other numerical reports alone do not demonstrate the actual impact of research on society.

Please register by 8 February 2019 at  
<https://goo.gl/forms/8PgwXtse4lftpNZ53>

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