



ADAM MICKIEWICZ UNIVERSITY IN POZNAŃ
Scholarly Communication Research Group

Impact assessment in Poland



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Research Evaluation Council in Poland

Poland

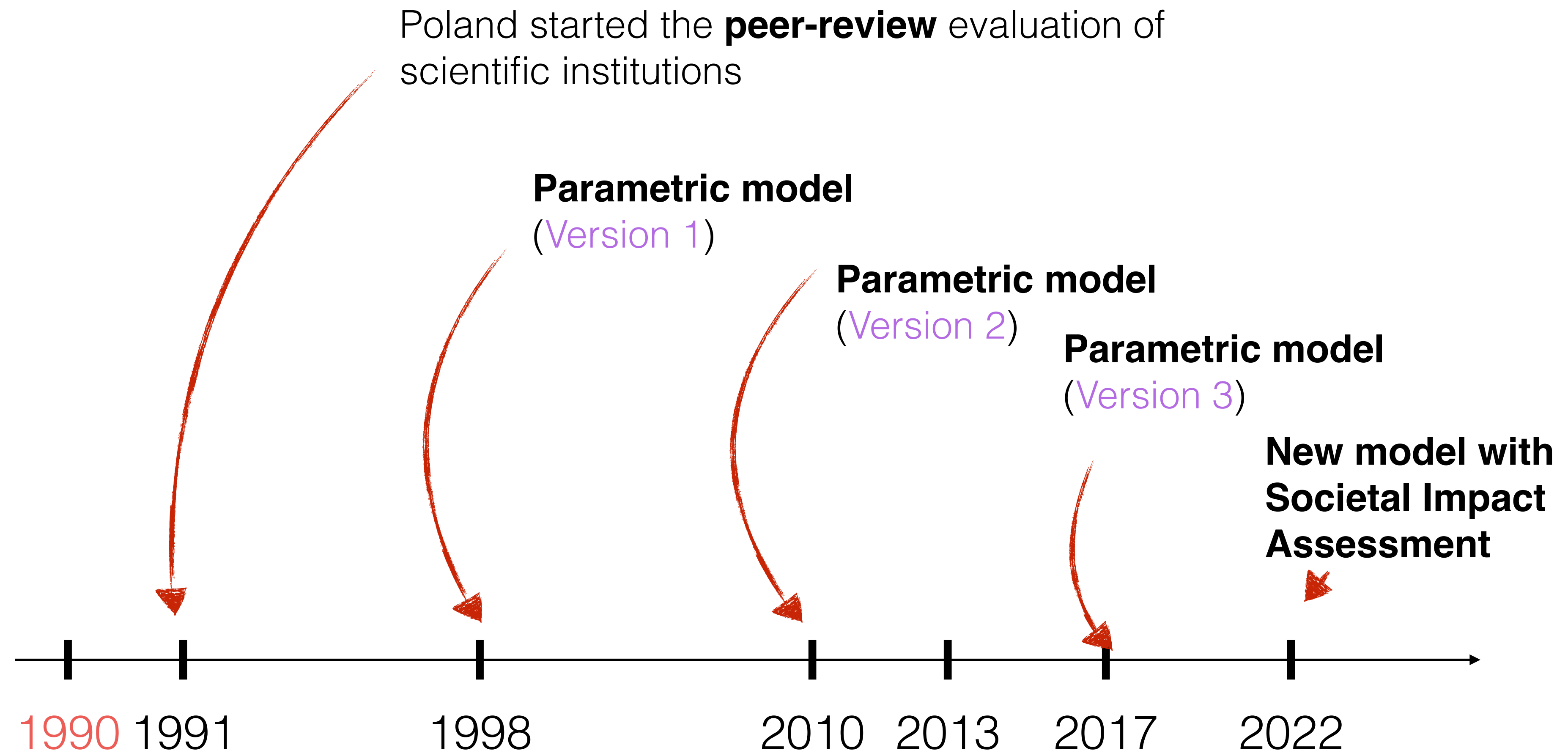
38 million citizens

400 higher education institutions

110.000 scholars

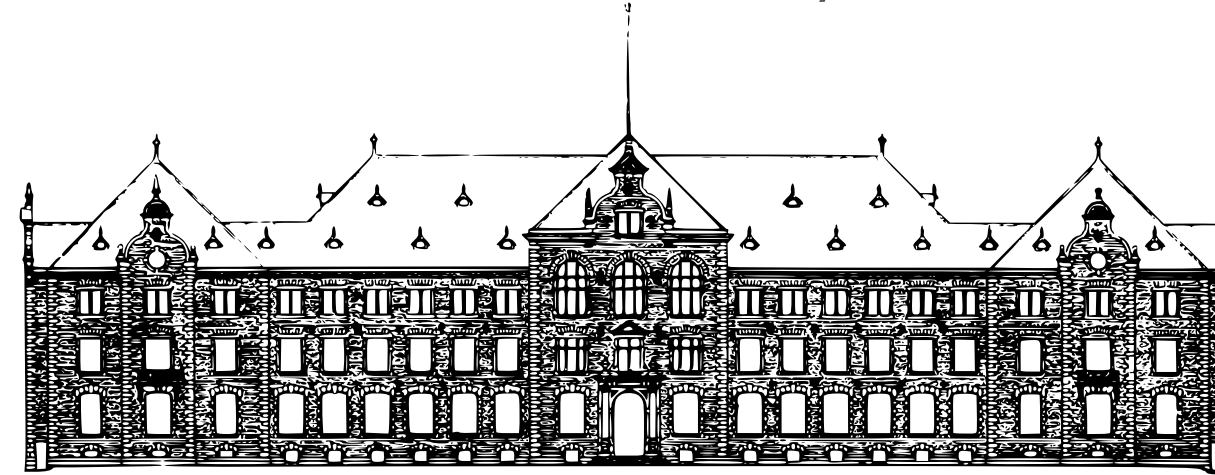


A long history of Polish research evaluation system



Unit of assessment – 2017-2021

Higher Education Institution University



Discipline 1

Discipline 2

Discipline 3

.....

Disciplines according to
researchers' declarations

From Implications to Societal Impact

In 2001, a new criterion, **Implementations**, was introduced in addition to the previously used and focused on scientific publications and R&D revenues. Implementations were defined as the **practical use (outside an evaluated scientific unit) of the scientific research results or the development work conducted in the scientific unit.**

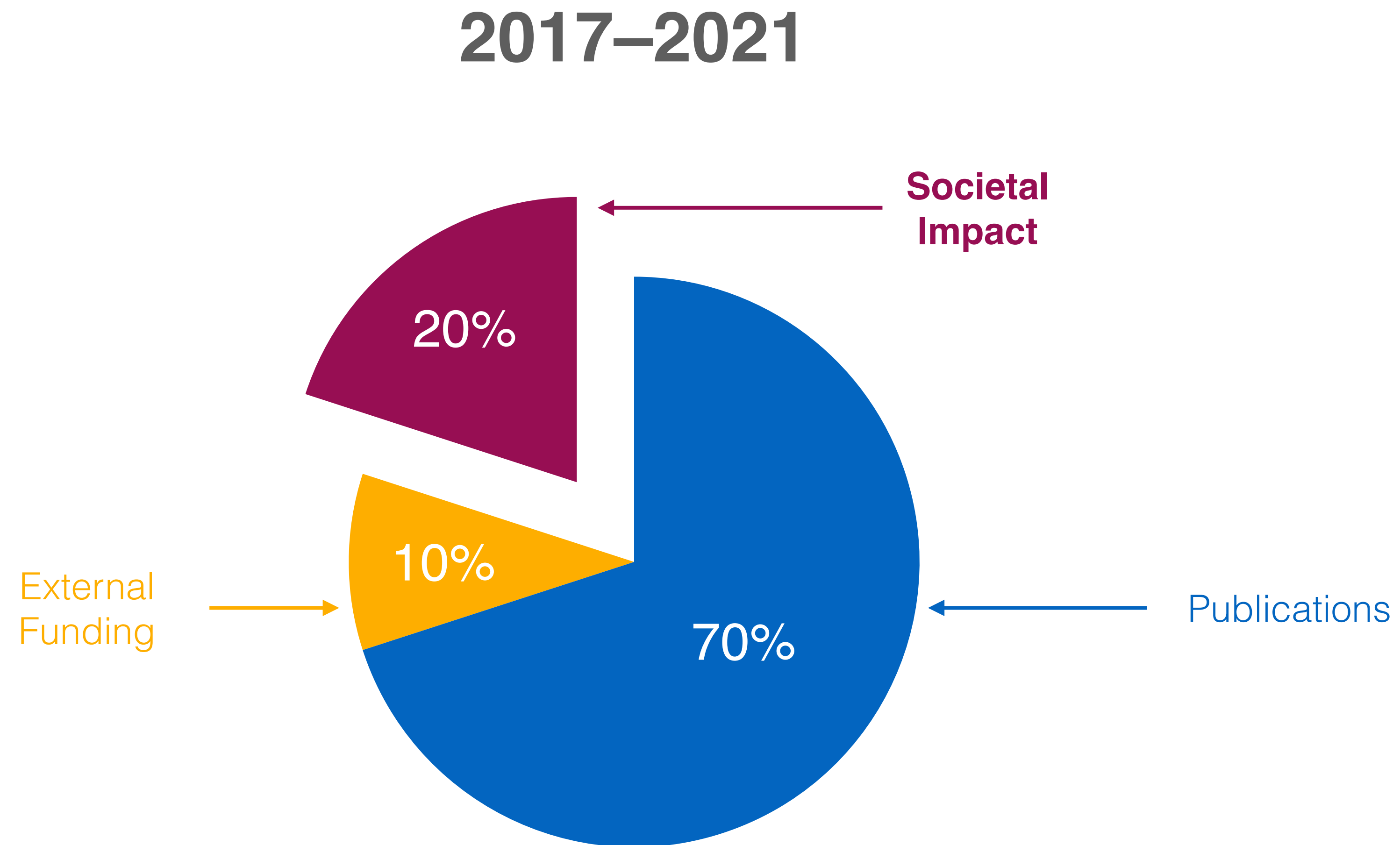


In 2012, the government reformulated the criterion and called it **Other effects of scientific activity** which included: **applications of the results of research or a development work of high social importance**



In 2018, the government transformed 'Other effects' into **Societal Impact** criterion and increased the weight of this criterion.

Criteria of Evaluation and their weights



Goals, Pilot study, Framework

Suggestion for the new criterion

- ☑ The government presented in 2018 a new Act for Science and Higher Education with a new model of evaluation.
- ☑ Societal Impact Assessment was suggested by science policy advisors not by academic community.



Goals and desired effects for adding a new criterion

- ☑ Extending the role of expert-based assessment.
- ☑ Appreciate more the non-publishing effects of research (especially in the humanities and social sciences).
- ☑ Create a database of descriptions presenting the successes of Polish scientists.



Pilot study 1/2

- ☑ In 2019-2020, a pilot study of social impact assessment procedures was undertaken to test the new legal arrangements for social impact designed for the 2022 evaluation exercise.
- ☑ The pilot study objectives were to develop procedures for collecting societal impact case studies and to develop expert assessment procedures.
- ☑ Three Polish universities participated in the pilot study: we evaluated 53 social impact case studies from 41 disciplines.
- ☑ We investigated the opinions of the case study authors on the preparation of the social impact case studies, as well as their attitudes towards the planned evaluation procedure and the pilot evaluation results.



Pilot study 2/2

- ☑ Impact narratives were assessed by the members of the Research Evaluation Council (who, in the final evaluation, were responsible for supervising the evaluators).
- ☑ The pilot study showed that all the disciplines could identify and prove the social impact of their research using the form provided.
- ☑ It took, on average less than 40 hours to prepare a narrative by a team of 2–4 people usually. That work was spread over several months due to identifying and documenting societal impact.
- ☑ The pilot study showed that evaluating impact narratives according to two dimensions, i.e., **reach** (geographical scope) and **significance**, expressed on a single-point scale, was problematic for experts.
- ☑ The government has implemented many recommendations and suggestions from the pilot study.

INTRODUCING SOCIETAL IMPACT EVALUATION IN POLAND: THE PILOT STUDY REPORT

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How societal impact is defined and evaluated
in the 2021 evaluation exercise ?

Legal definition of societal impact

Assessment of the **impact of scientific activity on the functioning of the society and economy** is carried out on the basis of descriptions of the **relationship between the results of scientific research** or development works or scientific activity in the field of artistic creation **and economy, functioning of public administration, health protection, culture and art, environmental protection, security and defence of the state or other factors influencing civilizational development of the society**, hereinafter referred to as „impact narratives”, drawn up on the basis of **evidence of this impact**, having in particular the form of reports, scientific publications and quotations in other documents or publications.

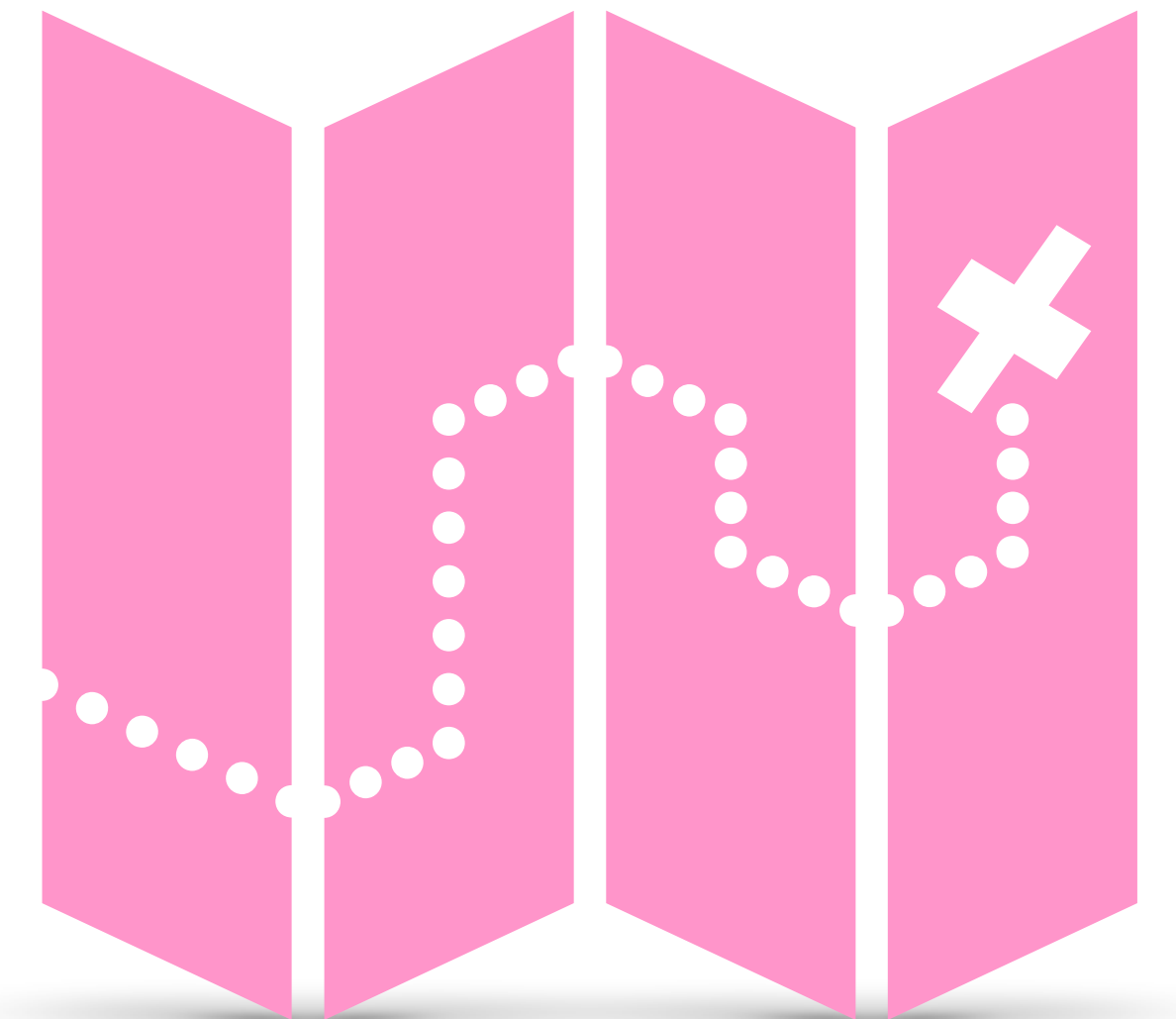


Information from the manual for evaluators

The purpose of assessing social impact (...) is to **emphasize the importance and appreciation of the application of scientific knowledge in both the local and global socio-economic environment.**

Social impact can be looked at in a similar way to citations, which are evidence that the results of scientific research were inspiring to other scientists, who used what was developed in their subsequent research.

Documenting social impact is important not only for the public, but also for science and higher education institutions, as it helps justify increased funding for science.



Structure of case study

Each discipline (at the university) had to provide from 2 to 5 impact case studies (the number depends on the full-time equivalent [FTE] of employees assigned to this discipline)

- ☑ **Summary** (1,000 characters).
- ☑ Characteristics of the **main results of research** (2,500 characters).
- ☑ Characteristics of the **role of evaluated institutions** in achieving the effects of scientific activity.
- ☑ Bibliographic description and abstracts of not more than **5 scientific achievements** that are the result of research in the period covered by the evaluation from 1997-2021 period.
- ☑ **Characteristics of the societal impact** with an indication of the **relationship between scientific activities and this impact**, as well as the social group that is the beneficiary of this impact and the area most affected by scientific activities (5,000 words).
- ☑ Detailed characteristics of no more than **5 evidence of the societal impact** (e.g. TV programs, articles in magazines, medical recommendations etc.) (max 500 characters for each evidence).
- ☑ Information on whether the impact was created as a result of **interdisciplinary** research or development work.

Evaluation of each case study

- ☑ A case study was evaluated by two experts: one from a given discipline and the leading expert from the field (but not from the given discipline). For instance, the case study from sociology was evaluated by a psychologist (leading expert) and sociologist.
- ☑ More than 300 evaluators were involved in the social impact evaluation.
- ☑ Each expert assigned points (0 / 20 / 30 / 40 / 50) in two dimensions: (1) **Reach** (Geographical scope) and (2) **Significance**.
- ☑ The score was increased by 20% if the interdisciplinarity of research or development work was crucial to the creation of the impact in question.
- ☑ The leading expert prepared a justification for the assessment. The justification could not be shorter than 800 characters.

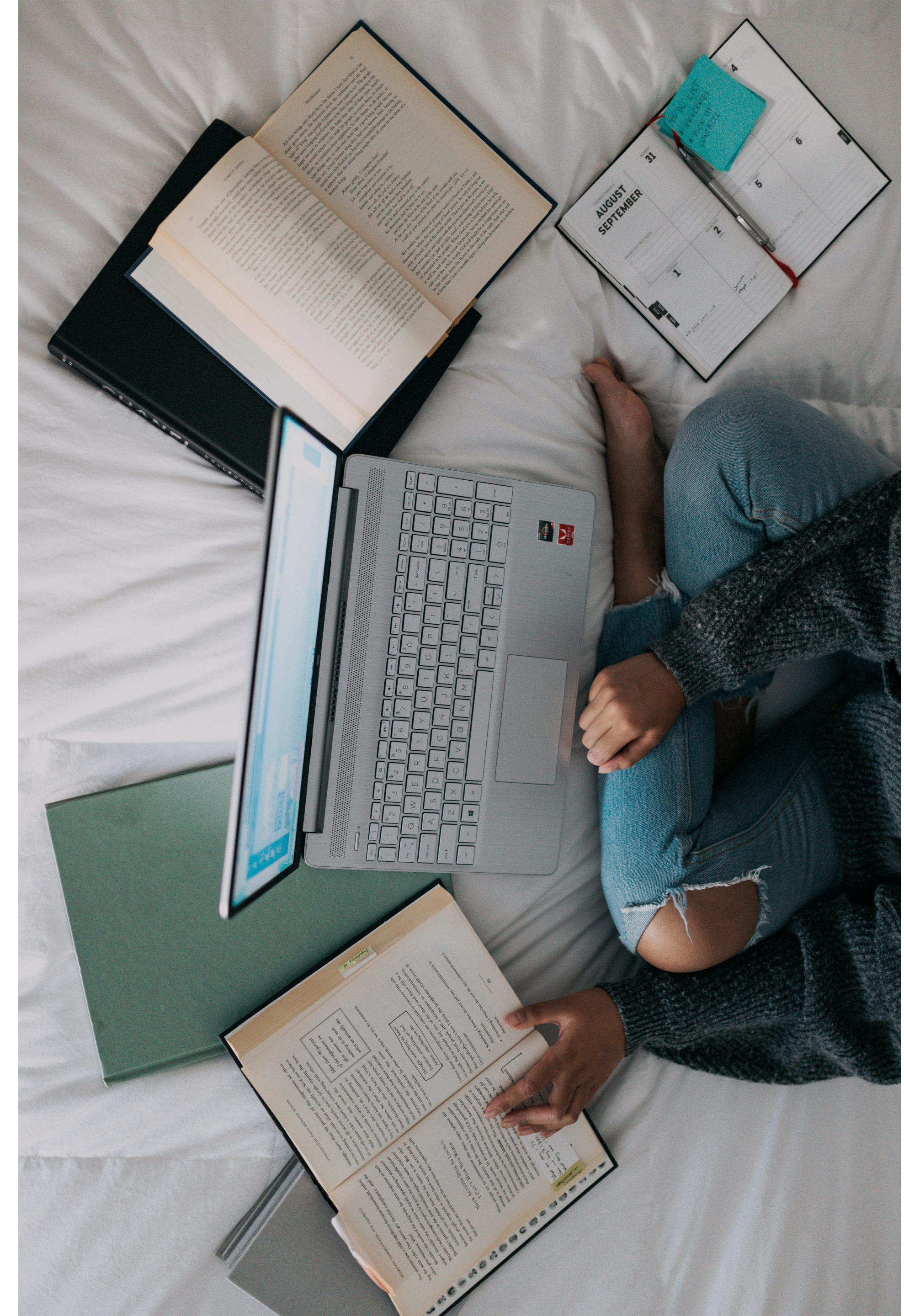


How did the framework affect my organization and my team?

My university (and other institutions) challenges

The greatest challenge: how to change mindset from “Impact Factor & Citations” to societal impact

- ☑ Everyone asked: "Who will choose the evaluators?"
- ☑ The biggest challenge was not identifying "case studies," but finding "evidence of social impact" that documents that impact.
- ☑ The second challenge was to convince the established professors that their work could not be presented as a case study because it was "scientifically great" but did not generate "societal impact."
- ☑ My team? It was tricky because the government used and cited my research on reforming the research evaluation system to reform the research evaluation by which my university was assessed. So, my university used my research in one of the case studies.



Key aspects of the criticism and key issues
identified for the development of the framework

Key points

- ☑ Dimensions (Reach, Significance) or Structure of Case Study are not criticized.
- ☑ Some minor critique refers to too significant a role (20%) of the criterion immediately after the implementation of the new criterion
- ☑ The most considerable criticism relates to the work of evaluators and their selection.
- ☑ Too many evaluators assessed scientific publication, not the impact itself, even though they were trained and the government provided various manuals. It is hard to change researchers' mindsets!
- ☑ A call for panel assessment (suggested in the pilot study) is constantly being heard.



Thank you

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