Author’s response to reviews

Title: ISRIA statement: ten-point guidelines for an effective process of research impact assessment

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Version: 1 Date: 19 Dec 2017

Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Dr Gonzalez-Mcquire,

Thank you for careful and thorough consideration of the manuscript. My colleagues and I are absolutely delighted that it is potentially acceptable for publication in HARPS.
Please find below our point-by-point response to the reviewers’ comments and suggestions. We believe that they have helped us improve the quality of the manuscript.

As you can see from the tracked changes in the revised version of the manuscript, we have also made a number of minor adjustments and additions throughout the manuscript to improve its readability and update the knowledge base. Furthermore, since last October we delivered the 5th edition of ISRIA, we have also updated the figures of participants and countries in ISRIA Figure 2.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

With best wishes,

Paula Adam

Corresponding author on behalf of all authors

REVIEWER #1:

This is a nice work in which the authors address one burning issue in the field of funding research as an operational strategy to implement changes in a number of public social activities. The approach is sound and of particularly high value as it comes from the experience of the ISRIA where a large number of well recognized experts meet regularly to become a world-wide think tank for RIA. The benchmarking work is of high value and the guidelines proposed by the authors reflect a deep intellectual analysis of the different bottlenecks that are present in the process of measuring the impact of public policies. I just have two minor suggestions that the authors may address and that would improve the manuscript

RESPONSE: Thank you for reading our manuscript and for providing us with valuable comments and suggestions.

1. Benchmarking with the impact assessment policies in the H2020 calls (particularly in the field of Heath Research) should be addressed. The EU is a major funder in biomedical research in Europe and without that comparison the manuscript won’t be round

RESPONSE: Thank you for pointing out this important omission. In the beginning of the Background section, we have added a description of Horizon 2020’s priorities and, further down in the bullet points, we have elaborated on and provided references to the policies to evaluate past programmes, monitor the current programmes, as well as recommendations for future programmes based on the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020.
2. It would be nice if the authors develop a little bit more in detail the problems existing behind the formulation of specific indicators for measuring impact. This is a critical issue as the way a specific indicator is developed would determine its capacity to measure the intensity of the event.

RESPONSE: We are grateful for the reviewer’s excellent suggestion to elaborate on the problems behind the formulation of specific indicators as we agree that it is a critical issue. We have substantially revised Recommendation 7 “Select indicators and metrics responsibly” to give more prominence to this important issue. We have elaborated on the problems, but also methods and strategies to overcome them in a new table (Table 1) outlining a set of common measurement cautions and mitigating strategies.

CHIEF EDITORS COMMENTS:

It’s a very useful, solid piece of work.

RESPONSE: Thank you for careful reading of the manuscript and positive feedback.

I think it would be useful to add a paragraph or two in the Background which briefly outlines the difficulties/challenges/controversies with current approaches to RIA.

RESPONSE: Thank you for this excellent suggestion. We have added a new textbox (Box 1) with five common methodological challenges in research impact assessment.

It would also be beneficial (but not required) to make some comments (probably later in the paper) about the authors’ vision for an ideal system.

RESPONSE: We agree that it would be beneficial to have an ideal system as a benchmark for developing and appraising new systems. Given that the manuscript attempts to synthesise guidelines based on the available evidence and practitioners’ experience, we have provided an evidence-based set of criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of new reporting tools against the ideal system proposed by Wooding et al.

I did wonder too whether it would be useful to provide some examples or case studies of how these principles are/could be applied. I look forward to seeing this paper published.

RESPONSE: We are delighted with this suggestion because our ISRIA colleagues are currently working on such case studies. To allow in-depth analysis and discussion of the case studies as
well as to avoid significantly lengthening the current manuscript, the case studies are being prepared for publication as a stand-alone research paper.