Briefing note – Staffan Furusten - August 2023

MODULE 1 - DEVELOPING A COMMON RESEARCH AND INNOVATION STRATEGY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Information about research and innovation is of great interest for researchers, research support staff, university management, policy makers, and decision makers in industry, public sector and civil society. Contemporary society is facing a number of grand challenges, and it is crucial that the quality, effectiveness and relevance of research and innovation is as high as possible. It is also crucial that the findings are open to all, allowing to conduct cutting-edge research, to experiment and innovate, and for decision and policy makers to engage in dialogues and make wise decisions based on cutting-edge and relevant knowledge.

According to these premises, the Module 1 of RIS4CIVIS project (Horizon 2020) aims to find a way to seamlessly share information about ongoing research and innovation at the CIVIS Alliance member universities. Therefore, Module 1 worked on the development of an **IT tool and online platform** to provide and share information related to research within the Alliance. The platform is currently being tested and improved.

INTRODUCTION

Module 1 of RIS4CIVIS focuses on ways for developing joint research and innovation strategies among the member universities of the CIVIS alliance. The members emphasize that the way to high quality, effective and successful research and innovation is through facilitating and supporting **bottom-up initiatives.**

The main objectives of Module 1 were to:

- Map and identify available research strategies and research profiles at the member universities.
- Implement a benchmarking of the main policies regarding the usage of specified research strategies
- Identify barriers for joint research and innovation strategies to develop.
- Develop a tool to overcome the barriers.
- Launch an IT tool and online platform.

To strengthen this overall strategy and simplify future efforts for joint research and innovation within the alliance, Module 1 has developed an IT tool and online platform capturing ongoing research and innovation within the alliance. Through this platform, it is possible to search for all kinds of topics or interest, research projects programs and publications, as well as research groups and individual researchers connected to the CIVIS alliance. **The platform is launched and is currently being tested**, and the vision is that it will simplify for researchers to establish contact and cultivate joint interests, and in the long run allow the identification of joint research and innovation strategies for the CIVIS alliance and collaboration with universities outside the alliance.

KEY FINDINGS AND OUTPUTS

The main findings at this stage include:

- That member universities emphasized bottom-up generated research and innovation as the most successful strategy for high quality research.
- The importance of knowledge sharing and research funding for joint research efforts to materialize.

- In that sense, the main output is the launching of a **digital platform** for sharing updated information about all on-going research and innovation activities at the member universities. Concerning joint research and innovation strategies, the vision is that this is a potential, and likely future outcome once researchers, research support units, and university managers start communicating with information generated from the platform as a base.

With better knowledge about what colleagues at other universities are working with, contacts can be taken, and if these are successful, dialogues and cooperation can be initiated with good chances for co-authorships and joint applications for research grants directed to as well national and European and international research funders. At the essence is that researchers, research support units and university managers in easy and use- friendly ways can come across information about research and innovation taking place at other universities. This is crucial for making it possible to overcome the most fundamental barrier for conducting research – funding.

Research collaboration across disciplines and national borders are in particular, for the time being, emphasized by European research councils and programs. A digital platform where research interests are shared within the alliance has a great potential to be of much use in this regard, especially for younger researchers that not yet have their own international networks.

If such initiatives are successful, an important step for research collaboration has been taken. Once researchers from different universities have established structures for developing and cultivating joint research interests, a fundament for future collaboration and joint strategies for research and innovation has been built.

These key findings are closely linked to the overall objective of the RIS4CIVIS project, i.e. "to produce an integrated, long-term Research & Innovation (R&I) Strategy that will over time enable the members of the CIVIS European University to integrate their know-how, expertise and resources in the service of R&I that effectively addresses current and future societal challenges, at local, regional and international level".

RECOMMENDATIONS

At this stage, as there are no specific national/EU-level barriers identified with regards to the shared use of already published research information, we do not move forward any policy recommendations.

- Instead, our first recommendation is that the findings and outcome of Module 1 will be used by first researchers, research support units and university managers in the purpose of fostering further collaboration for developing joint research and innovation activities and strategies, such as co-authorships, joint research applications and materialization of joint research and innovation programs.
- Our second recommendation is that the platform also should be used for communication purposes about on-going research, but also for fostering dialogues about quality and relevance of research and innovation with decision and policy makers in society.
- Our third and final recommendation is that the information about on-going research and research findings as well as publications will be consulted to a larger extent in policy- and decision making as well as in academia and in industry, public sector, and the civil society. We also hope that the outcome will support the relevant entities of the European Commission in designing its future programs and policies, such as Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe and the like, as well as national research councils and other research funders.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Research and Innovation Strategy for CIVIS (RIS4CIVIS) is 3-years project co-financed by the European Commission under the Horizon 2020 « Science with and for Society » programme. RIS4CIVIS will define a common Research & Innovation strategy for the CIVIS European University Alliance and transpose the strategy into an Institutional Transformation Model to serve as a source of inspiration for other European Alliances and universities. Further resources: The RIS4CIVIS platform for sharing information about research and innovation activities.

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