

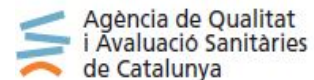


Doha, Qatar
The International School
on Research Impact Assessment

"Learning to assess research with
the aim to optimise returns"

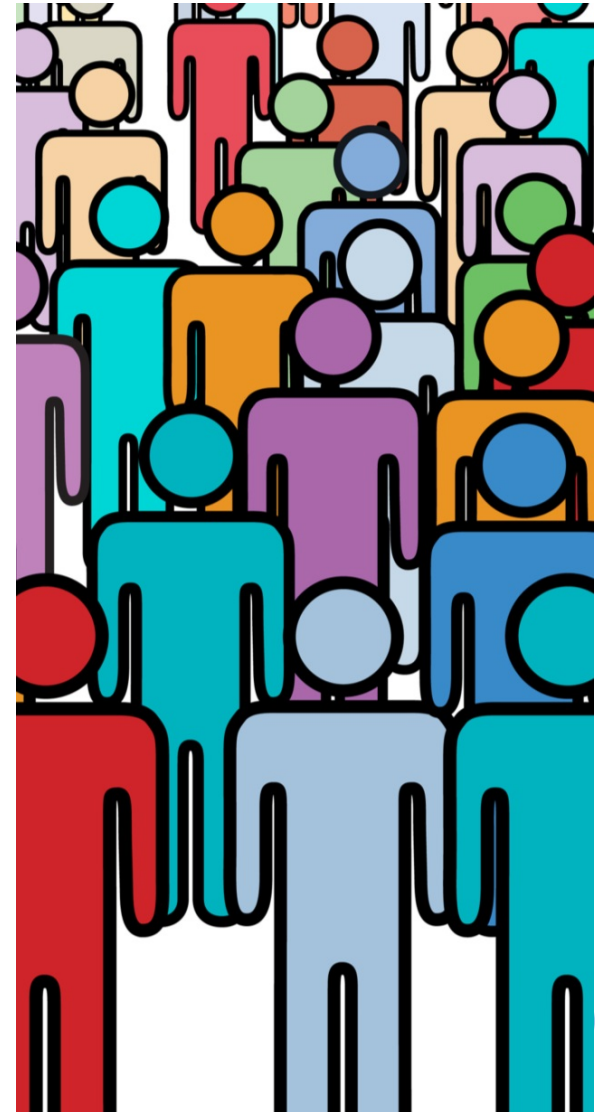
UNDERSTANDING THE NEED FOR RIA: ACCOUNTABILITY

ALEXANDRA POLLITT
RAND EUROPE
MONDAY NOVEMBER 9



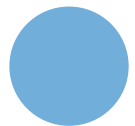
SESSION OVERVIEW

- What is accountability?
- How can we demonstrate accountability through RIA?
- A practical example



THE NEED FOR RIA

To manage and use research funds in
the best way possible



ACCOUNTABILITY

- Spending funds as you said you would
- Need to demonstrate accountability for the investment of public funds in research
- Important for all public funders



IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT...

- With pressure to reduce public spending, there is greater emphasis on transparency and efficiency
- Focus on science as a way of growing the economy





Is accountability really just about how you have spent the money?

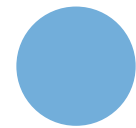
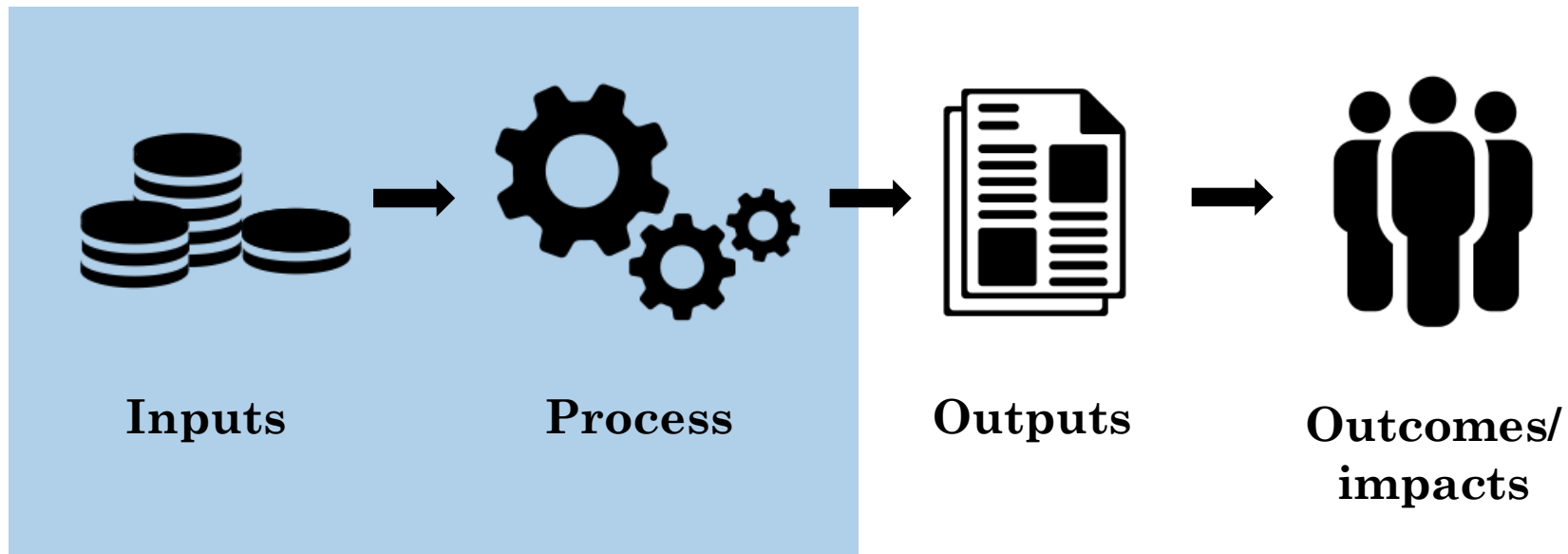


A SOCIAL CONTRACT?

- Using public money to provide value to the public
- Demonstrating a societal return



IMPACT AND ACCOUNTABILITY



AND NOT JUST FOR FUNDERS...

*“Qatar University.... has diverse and committed faculty who teach and conduct research, which **addresses relevant local and regional challenges**, advances knowledge, and contributes actively to the **needs and aspirations of society.**”*

*“The **University of British Columbia** creates an exceptional learning environment that fosters global citizenship, **advances a civil and sustainable society**, and supports outstanding research to **serve the people** of British Columbia, Canada and the world.”*



AND NOT JUST FOR FUNDERS...

*“The mission of the **University of Cambridge** is to **contribute to society** through the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.”*

*“The **University of Illinois** will **transform lives and serve society** by educating, creating knowledge and putting knowledge to work on a large scale and with excellence.”*

*“**University of Sydney**: Leading to **improve the world** around us.”*



How can we demonstrate accountability through RIA?



WHAT KIND OF RIA DO WE NEED?

- Comparable
- Scalable – need to be comprehensive
- Low burden
- Transparent



AND TOOLS...?

Tools to demonstrate accountability tend to be:

- Quantitative
- Transparent
- Suitable for high frequency and longitudinal use



AND TOOLS...?

For example:

- Bibliometrics
- Surveys
- Data mining
- Economic analysis



A practical example...



EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH FOR AUSTRALIA



An assessment system, administered by the Australian Research Council, which evaluates the research quality of all Australian universities.



OVERVIEW

- Key role in **accountability**: *“an evaluation framework that gives government, industry, business and the wider community assurance of the excellence of research“*
- Also used for advocacy and now for allocating performance-based block funding
- Now part-way through its 3rd round



OVERVIEW

- Institutions submit data on a range of research activities
- Primarily metrics-based
- Overall assessment by 8 Research Evaluation Committees (RECs) comprising ~150 researchers from Australia and overseas



ERA | **Excellence in**
2015 | **Research for**
Australia



INDICATORS

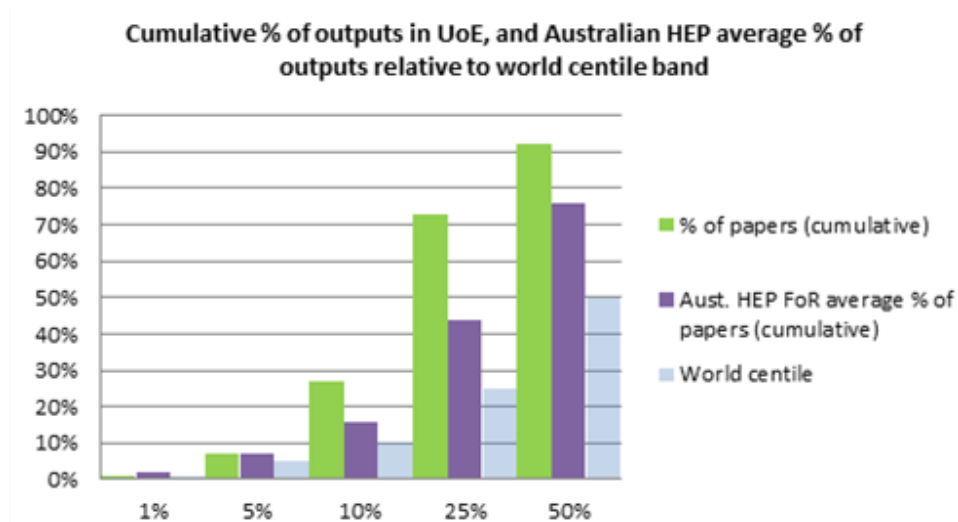
Indicator principles:

1. Quantitative
2. Internationally recognised
3. Comparable
4. Able to be used to identify excellence
5. Research relevant
6. Repeatable and verifiable
7. Time-bound
8. Behavioural impact

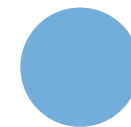


INDICATORS

- **Research quality** – citation data or peer review



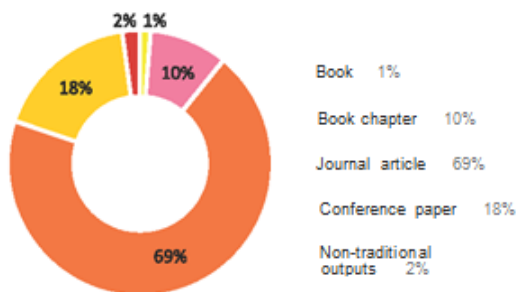
- Research volume/activity
- Research application
- Recognition



INDICATORS

- Research quality
- **Research volume/activity** – direct outputs, research income

Research outputs by type



Research Outputs	2010	2012
Non-traditional outputs		
Curated or Exhibited Event	750	777
Live Performance	1,807	821
Original Creative Work	9,052	6,026
Recorded/Rendered Work	1,260	790
Portfolio of Non-Traditional Research Outputs	374	583

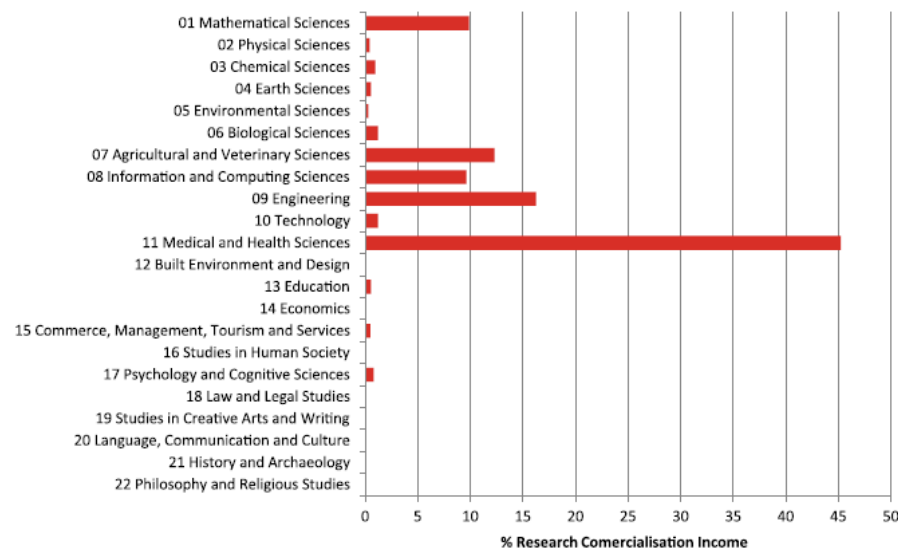
- Research application
- Recognition



INDICATORS

- Research quality
- Research volume/activity
- **Research application** – commercialisation, citation on guidelines

Research commercialisation income by two-digit FoR code



- Recognition



INDICATORS

- Research quality
- Research volume/activity
- Research application
- **Recognition – esteem measures**

Apportioned esteem measures by type (%)



OVERALL ASSESSMENT

- Indicators presented as ‘dashboard’ to REC
- Overall rating from REC
- National and international benchmarking

Medical and health sciences
Contribution to national landscape (%)



1 Medical and Health Sciences		207 out of 246 assessed UoEs were rated at or above world standard	
		Rating	Distribution
UoEs	9,236.9	5	82
Research outputs	91,859.9	4	63
Research income	\$3,427,611,54	3	62
UoEs assessed	246	2	24
Esteem count	1,330.5	1	15
Patents	208.8	Total	246
Research commercialisation income	\$124,094,57		



HAS IT BEEN USEFUL?

“ERA has improved the level of accountability and transparency within the university research sector, and contributed positively to government policy aimed at enhancing Australia’s research performance.”

ACIL Allen Consulting (2013)

- First iteration was used for **accountability** and **advocacy** purposes
- 2012 round also used in **allocating** performance-based block funding



STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES



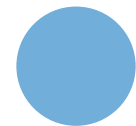
Strengths

- Acceptable to research community in Australia
- Burden on participants is moderate
- Indicator driven
- Produces a single performance indicator, which can be used for ranking
- Multi-disciplinary



Weaknesses

- Indicator driven
- Still moderated through peer review, reducing objectivity
- Does not capture societal impact comprehensively
- Requires some central expertise (bibliometric expertise on panel)



ACCOUNTABILITY: KEY MESSAGES

- Important to ensure that public money is spent effectively
- RIA should be comparable, scalable, low-burden and transparent
- Quantitative tools often used
- But can we better take into account downstream impacts?



FURTHER READING

- Guthrie, S., Wamae, W., Diepeveen, S., Wooding, S., & Grant, J. (2013). *Measuring research: A guide to research evaluation frameworks and tools.*
- Australian Research Council (2012). *Excellence in Research in Australia 2012. National report.*
- ACIL Allen Consulting (2013). *Benefits realisation review of Excellence in Research for Australia. Final report.*



THANK YOU!

Alexandra Pollitt
RAND Europe
apollitt@rand.org



EUROPE

