

“Evaluating the impacts of a public research organization”

Paris – Tuesday, November 27th and Wednesday, November 28th 2012

INRA Amphi A, 147 Rue de l’Université, 75007 PARIS

Program

INRA launched the ASIRPA project¹ early in 2011 to contribute to the methodologies for evaluating the impact of public agricultural research. The project is based on a series of 14 representative cases that have been studied following a standardized method. The objective of this conference is to share the experience gathered from the first two years of this project, with academics and practitioners that are involved in research evaluation worldwide.

The core of the conference will be based on five plenary sessions and one roundtable. Each session is expected to last 90 minutes, and will be comprised of one keynote lecture and two discussions, that will bring a general perspective and external experience related to the subject of the session.

Tuesday 27 November

9h00 Registration

9h30 Welcome by Hervé Guyomard (Deputy Director, science, agriculture, INRA)

9h45 Overview of ASIRPA project by Pierre-Benoît Joly (ASIRPA co-ordinator)

10h30 Break

11h00 **Session 1: Approaching the impacts of an organization: Benefits and limits of cases studies**

The objective of this session is to discuss the pros and cons of evaluating the impacts of an organization based on a restricted number of case studies. We will present the rationale behind the method developed in ASIRPA and examine the following issues: building a portfolio of activities generating impact, the asymmetry of impact generation, exemplar cases vs. flagships, information gathering etc.

Keynote : Irwin Feller (Pennsylvania State University)

Discussants: Sharon Drumm (USDA),
Catherine Moreddu (OCDE)

Chair: Mireille Matt (INRA GAEL)

12h30 Lunch

14h00 **Session 2: The question of attributing impact: Impact pathway and contribution to impact**

One major hurdle in impact evaluation is to tackle the attribution issue: i.e. the inability to determine the exact role and share of research in producing a given social benefit, as the observed benefit is the result of the involvement of a diverse set of actors over a long period of time during which actors deploy different activities along an “impact pathway”. Some evaluation methods propose to forego the search for attribution and describe the mechanism through which the contribution of research to social impact is made. This session will illustrate the power of such a change of perspective for the evaluation of research.

Keynote: Frank Rijsberman (Chief Executive Officer, CGIAR consortium)

Discussants: Jordi Molas-Gallart (INGENIO (CSIC-UPV),
Kate Barker (Manchester Institute of Innovation Research) *(to be confirmed)*

Chair: Philippe Laredo (ENPC- IFRIS)

15h30 Break

¹ http://www6.inra.fr/asirpa_eng/ASIRPA-project

16h00

Session 3: Building productive capacity over time

Outcomes that are in reality cumulative and dependent upon the interaction of several factors are usually wholly (or mostly) attributed to a sole (usually the last) funding. This feature is known as “project fallacy”. When looking at an organization and its activities, it is not enough to look at the level of individual projects. Account must also be taken of the accumulated knowledge, partnerships, reputations and others assets, which institutions and researchers build over time, and influence the choice and the range of future impact pathways.

Keynote : Puay Tang (University of Sussex)

Discussants: Ludovic Temple (CIRAD),
Krijn Poppe (LEI)

Chair: Laurence Colinet (INRA CODIR)

17h30

End of the day

Wednesday 28 November

9h00

Session 4: Measuring and judging impact

The starting point of the measurement of impact in a case study approach is the identification and construction of indicators associated with the major impacts, taking into consideration the plurality of socio-economic impacts. A second step is to measure the intensity of impact on this dimension, and a third one to make a judgment on the value of the impact created. This session will discuss methodological issues and illustrate ways of progress in the case of a research institute.

Keynote: Paul Heisey (USDA/ERS),

Discussants: Annette Boaz (King’s College London),
Katharina Helming (ZALF)

Chair: Stéphane Lemarié (INRA GAEL)

10h30

Break

11h00

Session 5: From case studies to the organization

Up-scaling is a key but difficult methodological problem which may be achieved by various ways. Drawing on some of the rare examples where this issue has been properly addressed, this session will aim at offering a better understanding of the various objectives of analysis at the organization’s level (efficiency, efficacy, learning, advocacy, etc.) and appropriate methodologies.

Keynote: Mitch Renkow (North Carolina State University),

Discussants: Stefan Kuhlmann (University of Twente)
Paul Nightingale (University of Sussex) *(to be confirmed)*

Chair: Pierre-Benoit Joly (INRA SENS – IFRIS)

12h30

Lunch

14h00

Roundtable with managers from public research organizations

Patrick Caron (Deputy Chief Executive, Science, CIRAD)

François Houllier (Chief Executive, INRA)

Frank Rijsberman (Chief Executive Officer, CGIAR consortium)

Craig Roy (Deputy Chief Executive, Science, Strategy and People, CSIRO)

Mari Williams (Deputy Director, Corporate Policy BBSRC)

15h30

Institutional conclusion by François Houllier (Chief Executive, INRA)

16h00

End of the day

Organizing committee: Laurence Colinet INRA Codir, Ariane Gaunand INRA GAEL, Amandine Hocdé INRA SenS, Pierre-Benoît Joly INRA SenS – IFRIS, Philippe Larédo Latts – IFRIS, Stéphane Lemarié INRA GAEL, Mireille Matt INRA GAEL

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