

# Idox Grants

## ARMA Session Report



JUNE 2016

# Knowledge Translation and the Golden Triangle of Research, Impact and Funding

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## Introduction

The annual ARMA Conference is one of many ways in which the Idox team engages directly with the UK research community, hearing firsthand the issues and experiences currently affecting the sector.

Returning as Silver Sponsors this year, we were delighted with the opportunity once again to support research staff and academics in their quest for funding.

To that end, we hosted a session on 8 June 2016 – Knowledge Translation and the Golden Triangle of Research, Impact and Funding – with guest speaker Dr Karl M Smith, Research Impact Manager at London South Bank University.



This report includes Dr Smith's presentation along with the feedback that we obtained from the group discussions.

We trust that you all enjoyed the conference as much as we did.

We look forward to supporting future ARMA endeavours and engaging with you again at upcoming events and seminars.

**Rebecca Erskine**

**Director – Idox Grants**

## Session Overview

### Session Agenda

The impact agenda set out by REF and the Research Councils poses significant challenges for academia. However, it also provides a potent opportunity to broaden the funding pool. The aim of this workshop was to describe and demonstrate how directing research towards impact delivery can yield new streams of funding and add value to research.

Dr Smith has extensive experience in research project management and applying to and delivering on a number of EU and UK funded projects. He is expert in navigating the funding landscape, especially how to access the right funds, from the right source, to support work with real-world impact. In his capacity as Research Impact Manager, he recognises that the key to impact is knowledge translation, which is often dependent upon sourcing funding from industry to enable the successful commercialisation of a product or spin-out.



The workshop provided attendees engaged with research funding and demonstrating impact the opportunity to share best practice tips and advice on the process of obtaining research funding, particularly from industry and other external sources, for knowledge translation and impact maximisation.

### Key Themes

Research Impact is not new. In its broadest sense, it occurs when a piece of research yields a benefit to society, the economy, culture or the environment. However, it is fast becoming a key metric of the value of Research. And what is driving the Impact agenda? The need to justify to the taxpayer the added value that the UK's world-leading research provides to communities and the economies around them.

But what does impact mean to academia? And what relationship does it have to research and funding?

With the 'impact agenda' now embedded in the research landscape, Dr Karl Smith frames the relationship between research, impact and funding as 'The Golden Triangle', emphasising that '*we cannot underestimate the importance of impact. It is vital*'. Impact provides a means of both leveraging research funding from atypical funding sources and validating the quality of research.

### Impact in the research process

The Research Excellence Framework 2014 (REF) set in place the requirement for universities to ensure that their research has real-world relevance – Impact. The ability to demonstrate the impact of research on society – whether economic, cultural, political, environmental or beyond – evidences that research is about far more than just academic advancement. And, with 'Impact' having accounted for 20% of the 2014 REF assessment score and speculation that this may be further increased in the next REF, the Impact agenda will only continue to increase in importance.

A strong *Pathways to Impact* carries significant weight in Research Councils UK (RCUK)' grant applications. This illustrates a current trend in shifting from a pure focus on research excellence, to a wider perspective that encompasses both knowledge translation and the sharing of the wider benefits of research. Horizon 2020 – the EU's flagship funding programme – is also underpinned by impact. Of the three criteria used, the dominant measure is now Impact.

Dr Smith referenced Sir Thomas Moore in his presentation: '*The duty of an intellectual in society is to make a difference*'. And it is this 'difference' that is underpinned by impact.

How does Impact take place? By research dissemination and especially the identification and engagement of the wider beneficiaries of the research, the research project lifecycle has so extended. It reaches beyond the delivery of a publication, to the use of that publication to shape the wider world, whether through policy, the formation of new commercial products and spin-offs, or behavioural change by the individual, society or industry.

### The modern research process

The three components of research, funding and impact are not mutually exclusive. We can say that funding supports research and that impact is a collective by-product of strong research and appropriate funding.

*'But why do researchers and academics need funding?'* asked Dr Smith during his presentation. *'And why should they want it?'* After all, it takes time to complete grant applications and there is no guarantee of success. However, just some of the benefits include:

- Improved chances of promotion and/or career development
- Opportunities to travel
- Increased capability of building collaborations and networks
- The ability to buy in expertise
- The ability to purchase equipment and resources
- The opportunity to develop esteem and build reputation
- The chance to sustain overheads and support job security

All in all, there is a vested interest for the academic. Funding is integral to research: it keeps the cogs turning and gets new projects off the ground.

Traditionally, the relationship between Research and Funding was one-dimensional. Good-quality research improved the chances of receiving funding and the ability to secure funding increased the capability to deliver more good-quality research and so, generate additional funding. But the research model has evolved. When we look beyond the research itself and its traditional outputs, what is left? How do we prove its legacy? The answer is 'impact'.

### Translating impact to the real world

*'Research isn't purely about producing papers, it's about producing innovation and informing service delivery'*, Dr Smith noted. Impact has its uses – having defined impact goals in research can:

- **Maximise research funding potential and increase income generation** – impact is scored favourably in research funding applications; harness this funding potential
- **Broaden the research funding sources available** – the service delivery aspect of impact widens the funding streams available, making accessible those for charities, corporations, local government etc. Services such as [RESEARCHconnect](#) cover the thousands of funding opportunities available from multiple sources
- **Help to raise the profile of the research/department/school/institution** – impact pushes the research out to others, increasing visibility and heightening engagement
- **Enhance the research** – it provides the opportunity to collaborate and involve more stakeholders (partners, beneficiaries, professional bodies etc.), enriching the research with eclecticism
- **Validate the research** – research that has been adopted or demonstrated impact is proven to be useful, credible and of excellent quality. Real and robust research is the end goal
- **Define the research** – determining the direct and indirect research beneficiaries allows those involved to hone in on the short and long term benefits, helps to outline the purpose and aims of the research and encourages people to ask the right questions. Needs and drivers allow researchers to make a tailored case for support and undertake a costs/benefits analysis

- **Convert the research into money** – beneficiaries and partners can be used as leverage to generate additional funding e.g. Innovate UK does not provide funding to universities directly but will support those with an industrial partner

However, as with everything, impact also brings along its own challenges and criticisms. Some argue that increasingly prioritising impact will:

- shift resource and quality away from the research itself;
- risk diluting research excellence;
- jeopardise the UK's innovation system by changing the fundamental research structures;
- discourage novel and high-risk research resulting in homogenous research efforts; and
- produce potentially negative, unexpected impacts and bring about unnecessary costs e.g. by enforcing new frameworks for research excellence.

Dr Smith expressed his final thoughts on impact: *'Impact is about changing the world. It's proof that something has changed regardless of whether it is local or international. A paper by itself will typically sit in someone's repository, and/or on an online publisher site and it might receive a few citations but it will not change the world. Impact will. If that paper gets picked up and used to realise a tangible benefit to society, the economy or the environment, that's changing the world.'*

It is important to exploit impact to its full advantage and to make a compelling case to academics to get involved. Impact asks and challenges researchers to look beyond the benefits to academia. It requires a pool of researchers, resources, collaborators and a desire to make an impact outside of a laboratory or a publication.

The ripple effect considers how one action has subsequent influence elsewhere. The impact agenda is about harnessing those ripples to make research waves instead.

## Session Presentation

### 4. Task management

The screenshot shows a web-based task management system. At the top, there are sections for 'UPDATING RESEARCH GRANTING' and 'RESEARCH NEWS'. Below these is a 'Task list' table with columns for 'Task name', 'Status', 'Priority', and 'Due date'. The table contains several rows of tasks, some with checkmarks and icons indicating their progress.

## The Golden Triangle of Research, Impact and Funding

Harnessing knowledge translation to broaden the research funding pool

Dr Karl M. Smith  
Research Impact Manager, London South Bank University

### Funding?

A central blue box with a yellow pound sign (£) is surrounded by six other blue boxes: 'Travel', 'Promotions', 'Expertise', 'Resources', and 'Esteem'. Arrows point from each of these boxes towards the central £ symbol, suggesting that these factors contribute to securing funding.

### The traditional model

Two blue circles, one labeled 'Funding' on the left and one labeled 'Research' on the right, are connected by a thick, dark blue double-headed arrow, indicating a reciprocal relationship between the two.

### Impact

> **Research Councils UK**

Research has **demonstrable contribution to:**

- society
- the economy

### Impact

> **Research Excellence Framework**

An effect on, change or benefit **beyond academia to:**

- the economy
- society
- culture
- public policy or services
- health
- the environment
- quality of life

### Impact and funding

> **RCUK**

- Budget – typically allocate ≥ 2% on Impact (unofficial figure!)

> **H2020**

- Impact one-third of bid and assessment criteria
- If two applications have same marks, reviewers may prioritise Impact over quality of science

Clint Styles; Peter Staniszewski (2015) University of Southampton

### The Golden Triangle

A yellow equilateral triangle is shown. The word 'Research' is in a box at the top vertex, 'Impact' is in a box at the bottom-left vertex, and 'Funding' is in a box at the bottom-right vertex.

**Impact = more funding?**

London South Bank University

Old system	New (Impact) system
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; RCUK</li> <li>&gt; EU</li> <li>&gt; British Academy/council</li> <li>&gt; Leverhulme Trust etc.</li> <li>&gt; Other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; RCUK</li> <li>&gt; EU</li> <li>&gt; British Academy/council</li> <li>&gt; Leverhulme Trust etc.</li> <li>&gt; Third sector/charities</li> <li>&gt; Companies/corporations</li> <li>&gt; Local government</li> <li>&gt; Overseas governments</li> </ul>




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**Orienting research towards Impact**

London South Bank University

> The case to academics

1. Promotion
  - i. enhanced profile of department
  - ii. increased income to university
  - iii. public/professional recognition



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**Orienting research towards Impact**

London South Bank University

> The case to academics

2. Enhancing research
  - i. raises funding potential
  - ii. creates new stakeholders/collaborations
  - iii. opens up new research areas



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**Orienting research towards Impact**

London South Bank University

> The case to academics

3. Research that changes

*"The duty of an intellectual in society is to make a difference"*  
Sir Thomas Moore




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**Cashing in on Impact**

London South Bank University

1. Identify beneficiaries:

- short-term
- long-term



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**Beneficiaries**

London South Bank University

> The government/UK taxpayers/the EU

> Specific groups: students/patients etc.

> Companies – start-ups through to corporates

> Local stakeholders

- residents
- small businesses
- users of recreational facilities
- service users
- council/local government

> Practitioners

> Service providers




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**Cashing in on Impact**

London South Bank University

1. Identify beneficiaries
  - Short-term
  - Long-term
2. Ascertain available financial resources
  - Held by beneficiary
  - Held by appropriate funding schemes/bodies
3. Engage beneficiaries
  - Personal recommendations/links
  - Networking – industry/professional association events
  - Showcasing past successes of research group

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**Cashing in on Impact**

London South Bank University

4. Find out needs and drivers
5. Develop a tailored case for support
  - Cost-Benefit analysis
  - Appeal to their values and profit motive
  - Stress market advantage of innovation


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**Cashing in on Impact** 

**The case for the beneficiary**

- Funding scheme access – H2020, Life+, Innovate UK etc.
- Recourse to proposal writing expertise
- Potential low-cost/free consultancy – e.g. student projects
- Solutions to challenging problems
- Insights into archived data-sets
- Access to Facilities/Equipment
- Association with recognised brand
- Leading edge knowledge and expertise
- IP development



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**Cashing in on Impact** 

4. Find out needs and drivers


5. Develop a tailored case for support

- Cost-Benefit analysis
- Appeal to their values and profit motive
- Stress market advantage of innovation




6. Engage local stakeholders who can strengthen case

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**Cashing in on Impact** 

7. Forewarn of publishing plans and emphasise publication benefits:

- Corroboration of robustness of work – peer review
- Evidencing of originality of approach: proof of market edge
- Opportunity for co-authorship: professional esteem



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**Challenges** 


1. Strong case for investment

2. Communicating advantages to beneficiaries

3. Intellectual property management

- Get professional advice from your institution's legal/contracts/IP team
- Be realistic – conceding some IP is better than no deal
- Stress benefits to investor even if IP stake is low

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**Challenges** 





4. Negotiating data ownership/commercial sensitivity issues RE publishing







- Don't rush into Non-Disclosure agreements
- Consult with research office/colleagues RE publishing without jeopardising IP/agreements
- Emphasise benefits of publishing

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**Past projects: EU – PF6**











Imperial College London   Global Change and Ecosystems priority (contract No: FP6-018525)


**Dewatered Sewage sludge**     **Chemviron Carbon** 800-950 °C

**Dried sludge**       **210 grams of sewage sludge**


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**Past projects: Technology Strategy Board (Innovate UK)**

Imperial College London          

**Waste tyre** 

**Char – filler in new tyre manufacture**

**Oils** 

**£2.4 million project – 50% funded**

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**Past projects: Blue Green Dream – Climate KIC**

€3 million project | bgd.org.uk | PI: Prof C Maksimovic

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**Key points**

- > Impact yields both excellent research and new funding streams
- > Pro-active networking key to maximising Impact's funding potential
- > Vital to convey benefits to the academic AND the investor
- > **Impact is your route towards changing the world**



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**Group activity**



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**Thank you!**

**More information:**

- > Dr Karl M. Smith, Research Impact Manager, London South Bank University, [karl.smith@lsbu.ac.uk](mailto:karl.smith@lsbu.ac.uk)
- > RESEARCHconnect and GRANTfinder – Rebecca Erskine, Director Grants UK, [rebecca.erskine@idoxgroup.com](mailto:rebecca.erskine@idoxgroup.com)

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## Session Outcomes

During the interactive part of the workshop, attendees were split into groups and were asked to consider the following:

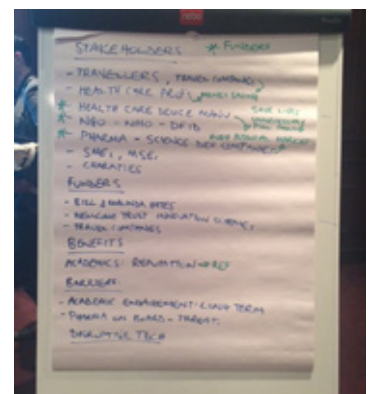
**Create a combined Funding Stream and Research Impact plan that makes no recourse to RCUK or Horizon 2020 funding, using a case study taken either from your own experience, or using one of our case studies.**

- 1. State how you will enlist the support of both the targeted funders/stakeholders and also, the academic.**
- 2. What barriers will you face and how will you overcome them?**

The following comments were captured on the day, both from the floor and included on the flipcharts and through the notes submitted at the end of the session.

### Targeted Funders

- European Commission
- Professional bodies
- Government funding (local, regional and national)
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)
- Think tanks
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Manufacturers and suppliers
- Charities
- Corporate sponsors
- Collaborative funding between universities (national and international)



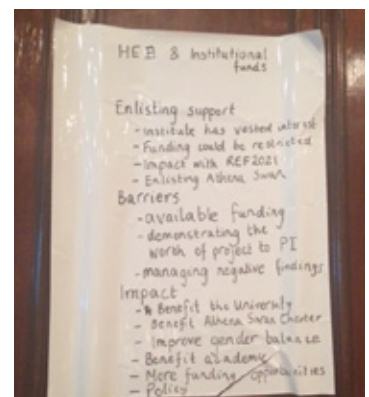
## Enlisting Targeted Funders/ Stakeholders' Support

- Utilise the skills and expertise of the Enterprise Team
- Take advantage of additional skills inhouse (other teams, schools, departments)
- Give the academic the opportunity to carry out REF-able research
- Explore partnership opportunities with charities, SMEs and international organisations with similar goals and ethics
- Understand the full implications of REF2021
- Outline the impact outcomes before starting the research – do not leave it until the end of the project and risk wasted opportunities
- Consider external experts in the field of research that you are hoping to conduct
- Ensure you have a rapid response to any external factors affecting the research
- Learn from past experience
- Use the knowledge and experience gleaned from previous projects e.g. when it comes to IP issues – someone will always have encountered a similar problem before



## Overcoming Barriers

- Articulating the 'problem' effectively as a project
- Obtaining researcher or stakeholder buy-in
- Ensuring academic engagement
- Availability of funding and having to adhere to strict funder guidelines
- Building the right team with the right skills and values and ongoing, effective project management
- Managing negative responses and findings
- Timescales – pressures on meeting milestones, targets and end goals in an appropriate timeframe
- Managing the external environment – factors outside of your control
- Pressure from opposing groups
- Availability of primary data and previous research
- Disruptive technology or advances in research
- Cultural, societal and economic history – approach areas with sensitivity where warranted
- Political and legislative changes



## Further Information

Thanks to all who attended our session and who provided such great feedback. If you have any further comments, please feel free to contact the team at [rc.research@idoxgroup.com](mailto:rc.research@idoxgroup.com)

## Stay in touch

Looking for further information or seeking to access the latest EU funding and policy insight? We have a number of ways for you to keep in touch:



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[www.researchconnect.co.uk](http://www.researchconnect.co.uk)

## Gallery

