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GRANT AGREEMENT NUMBER

101035819

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme

ENLIGHT RISE- RESEARCH AND INNOVATION AGENDA WITH AND FOR SOCIETY: LEVERAGING DIGITAL INNOVATION FOR A GREENER AND HEALTHIER EUROPE

WP No	Del. Rel. No	Del No	Title	Lead beneficiary
8	D8.3	D38	Toolkit for monitoring and assessing R&I impact #V2	NUI GALWAY

Nature	Dissemination Level	Related to Del. No (if applicable)
Websites, patents filling, etc.	Public	D37

Description (short)
The Digital toolkit for monitoring and assessing R&I impact acts as a self-assessment resource. Deliverable D37 describes the design and development process of this toolkit. This deliverable D38 reviews the results from the initial uptake of the toolkit and tracks changes in research impact awareness, literacy and readiness at ENLIGHT universities.
Access the web-based tool here: Self-Assessment ENLIGHT (enlight-eu.org)

Document Version Control		
Draft awaiting European Commission approval		
Version 0.1	Originated by:	NUIG/ UGENT/ UPV/EHU
DOI	https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12743360	

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INTRODUCTION: ENLIGHT and ENLIGHT RISE

ENLIGHT is an alliance formed by nine comprehensive research-intensive universities from nine European countries (Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain & Sweden). ENLIGHT obtained funding from the European Commission in the Horizon 2020 *Science with and For Society* (SwafS) work programme for the **ENLIGHT RISE project (Research and Innovation agenda with and for Society)**, which seeks to strengthen the research and innovation dimension of the ENLIGHT alliance. In synergy with ENLIGHT's educational components and surrounding ecosystems, **ENLIGHT RISE** deploys a comprehensive joint transformation agenda for our universities.

In the new phase of ENLIGHT (ENLIGHT 2.0, 2023-2027), the University of Bern joined the alliance which strengthens the diversity and impact of the alliance, furthering its mission to develop a university of the future.

The **ENLIGHT RISE** project is structured around nine major Work Packages, with **WP8 focusing on Impact**. WP8 aims to promote a mission and impact-driven research and innovation agenda. It explores the frontiers of a common impact-driven R&I agenda (task 8.1), analyses opportunities and barriers to implementing this agenda (8.1.3); develops actions to promote a culture of R&I impact (8.1.1); and reviews global methods and good practices of impact assessment and measurement (8.1.2). Additionally, WP8 facilitates impact knowledge sharing with other European Universities Alliances as part of the **FOREU2** initiative, to spread and share solutions, successful practices, identified barriers and challenges, as well as cooperation formats and models (Task 8.2).

WP8 is led by the University of the Basque Country, with co-leads University of Galway and Ghent University. The primary focus of WP8 is the concept of "Research Impact", as distinct from R&I impact.

As one of the first consensuses, WP8 leaders with the partner university representatives agreed on the following definition of research impact as the effects of research in the real world. ***Impact is the changes we can see (demonstrate, measure, capture), beyond academia (in society, economy, environment) which happen because of our research (caused by, contributed to, attributable to).***

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Research Impact Landscaping Exercise

During the initial development of the ENLIGHT Toolkit for the Self-Assessment of Institutional Research Impact in November 2021, the WP8 team posed three key questions to each partner University to gauge their understanding and implementation of R&I impact policies and practices.

Key Questions:

1. What is your understanding of R&I Impact?

The ENLIGHT RISE definition *'Impact is the provable effects of research in the real world. Impact is the changes we can see (demonstrate, measure, capture) beyond academia (in society, economy, environment) which happen because of our research (caused by, contributed to, attributable to)'* was provided for clarity.

2. Does your university have an R&I Impact policy/implementation plan? If so, could you please give more information about it?

Instructions provided – *If it applies, please add a general description of the R&I Impact policy/implementation plan accompanied by the supporting webpage links or documents.*

3. Independently of the response to the previous question, could you please identify (a) good R&I Impact practice(s) in your university?

Instructions provided – *Please just add the name of the 'good R&I Impact practices' followed by the supporting links and/or documents.*

The results indicated significant disparities in institutional recognition of research impact among ENLIGHT Universities. Figure 1 and Figure 2 below show the results and conclusions from this exercise.

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General overview of the ENLIGHT Universities' R&I Impact landscape			
ENLIGHT University	1 Definition of Impact	2 Institutional Impact Policy	3 Good Practices
UGENT	YES. REF definition - Distinction between scientific, economic and societal impact - Impact vs. economic valorisation vs. societal value creation - Different types of impact (big, small, local, global, instrumental, conceptual)	YES. Policy Plan 2 focus areas: - framework for quality assurance and assessment via a description of the most common types of societal value creation - creating an academic environment conducive to societal value creation Comprehensive set of actions	YES. - Impact as a dimension in the evaluation approach and portfolio of research - Interdisciplinary research consortia aimed at realising societal impact - Societal Value Creation Fund - Director for Impact at Schools level - Impact Success Stories - Outreach activities
COMENIUS	NO. But agrees with proposed WP8 definition	NO. But promotion of an Impact Implementation Logic (Impact Pathway). In-House Innovation officer; Intersectoral collaboration is encouraged.	YES. Impactful research projects vs. knowledge transfer projects
UPPSALA	NO. But agrees with proposed WP8 definition. Interested in "demonstrate, measure, capture" impact.	NO. But promotion of an Impact Implementation Logic (Impact Pathway). In-House Innovation officer; Intersectoral collaboration is encouraged.	YES. Impactful research initiatives vs. innovation projects.
UPV/EHU	NO. But agrees with proposed WP8 definition	YES. Impact is an embedded part of UPV/EHU 2030 agenda for sustainable development	YES. Analysis of the impact and contribution of UPV/EHU to the regional innovation ecosystem through a "narrative with numbers" case study (in the framework of a EC study)
NUIGalway	YES. - Similar (more elaborated) WP8 definition. - Distinction Academic vs Non-Academic Impact - Research Impact as benefit	YES. Impact is an embedded part of NUIGalway Strategic Plan 2020-2025 , which includes several impact-related flagship goals. And confirmed by NUIGalway Research and Innovation Strategy 2020-2025	YES. - Research Impact Officer - Guidance and access to resources on Research Impact (sharepoint) - Research Impact Case Studies
TARTU	YES. Tartu's Strategic Plan defines Impact in its economic dimension "increase the impact of research results on economic development through business agreements, consultation and creation, protection and rapid commercialisation of intellectual property."	YES. Impact is an embedded part of Tartu's Strategic Plan 2021-2025 . However, R&I impact indicators do not reflect societal impact , but publications, citations, external research funding, business contracts, spin-offs.	YES. - UniTartu Ventures to support research-based entrepreneurship
RUG	YES. 2013 definition - Distinction between economic and societal impact of both educational and research activities	YES. Impact is an embedded part and a pillar of RUG's Strategic Plan 2020-2026 , including a set of concrete actions to promote impact (professional support organisation, training students/ graduates, recognising/ rewarding commitment to societal impact, interdisciplinary/ inter-sectoral cooperation)	YES. - Repository of research and societal impact stories - NWO Impact scout pilot (concepts to raise awareness, plan and enlarge research projects' impact).

ENLIGHT RISE Definition: "Impact is the provable effects of research in the real world. Impact is the changes we can see (demonstrate, measure, capture), beyond academia (in society; economy; environment) which happen because of our research (caused by, contributed to, attributable to)".

Figure 1 Overview of Impact Landscaping Exercise ENLIGHT WP8 from D8.2 (<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7588960>)

Overview of ENLIGHT Universities' Research Impact landscape	
Main conclusions	
1. R&I Impact definition:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 out of 9 Universities do not have a thought-out definition of R&I impact - Different interpretations of R&I impact: academic vs economic vs societal impact - In few cases impact is clearly associated with "economic valorisation" of R&I via business agreements, commercialisation, etc. - In a specific case R&I impact is considered together with Education activities impact - The interpretation of R&I Impact is conditioning the identification of "good practices"
2. R&I Impact policy/ implementation plan:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only 1 University has a stand-alone R&I Impact policy plan, with concrete priorities and actions planned. - 4 out of the 9 Universities tackle Impact as an embedded part of a wider strategic policy framework, but with different grades of depth and detail. - 2 out of these 4 Universities identify a concrete set of actions for promoting R&I Impact.
3. Identification of good R&I Impact practices:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different interpretations of good R&I Impact practices: 3 responses are focused on the institutional practices to promote a culture of Impact; others identify impactful R&I projects; and others focus on knowledge transfer/ innovation / entrepreneurship support practices; and one identifies a methodological approach.

Figure 2 Overview of Impact Landscaping Exercise ENLIGHT WP8 from D8.2 (<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7588960>)

To update the answers and see if any changes were made in the ENLIGHT Universities R&I Impact landscape, the exercise was relaunched in April 2024, asking 'does the 2021 response remain valid? and provide any revisions or amendments'

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Below figure 3 gives an overview of the responses from the 2024 R&I Impact Landscape exercise:

UPDATE OVERVIEW OF ENLIGHT UNIVERSITIES R&I IMPACT LANDSCAPE			
ENLIGHT University	1. Definition of Impact	2. Institutional Impact Policy/Implementation Plan	3. Good Practices
Tartu	YES – no change on response	YES – Impact is embedded in strategic plan and emphasis will likely be on impact in the next strategic plan.	YES – Tartu have established the Centre for Sustainable Development in 2022, analysing societal challenges, using concepts & methods from different disciplines.
Bordeaux	YES – agree with WP8 definition but differentiate between planned impact at the beginning of a project and impact which can be measured at the end.	NO – still no policy however the launch of several actions such as 'impact project' providing methodological kit on impact assessment.	YES – projects with impact requirements, guide with impact vocabulary is planned, methodological guide for impact pathway, methodological guide to impact assessment are all planned.
Groningen	YES - still using SEP 2021-2027 & strategic plan 2021-2026 as framework	Since 2021, the Research & Impact cluster has been further developed. Situated at the core of the university, the cluster contributes to university-wide policy, provides advice to the board, and supports faculties and researchers. The cluster's goal is to ensure that the RUG excels in research and maximizes the societal impact of its research.	YES - currently making an inventory of practices across the faculties. One example is the recent start of the Theory of Change workshop for researchers applying for large grants. We plan to extend this workshop to include public-private partnership collaborations and innovation grant applicants
Galway	YES – European Commission definition of Research Impact. Distinction between academic & non-academic impact.	YES – embedded in both institution strategic planned and R&I strategy. Impact is central to the Institutional Review of Research Performance and developing impact case studies.	YES – remains valid and adding in a Research Impact Seminar Series since July 2023.
UGent	YES – REF definition still good but mostly use a variation of Julie Bailey's version	YES – still in place and administrative & policy levels undergoing restructure creating opportunities to rethink policy & impact support structure	YES – with additions: develop new assessment framework for interdisciplinary research consortia aimed at societal impact / expansion of research info system & research explorer / specific strategy creation / Doctoral schools training on socio-economic impact / integrating impact in Global Minds Fund
Comenius	NO – response is the same as previous, no set definition but agrees with WP8 definition	NO – not yet a R&I Impact policy, but institutional guidelines will be prepared later 2024	YES – Impactful research and knowledge transfer
Uppsala	NO – response is the same as previous, no definition but agrees with WP8 definition. R&I Impact understanding varies across the university.	NO – difficult to implement due to decentralisation of research domains.	YES – impactful research and innovation projects, using tools to promote researchers to use their research for innovation and impact
UPV/EHU	NO – agrees with WP8 definition	NO – impact is embedded in UPV/EHU 2030 agenda, and creation of a social impact office to spread impact culture throughout university	YES – remains valid. Also conducting studies aiming at measuring social impact of the institution.

Figure 3 Overview of Impact Landscaping Exercise June 2024 ENLIGHT WP8

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The results from this second iteration and update to the Impact Landscaping Exercise demonstrated that although there was still some disparity in the Institutional recognition of Research Impact among the ENLIGHT Universities there was certainly a shift in thinking and a move towards conformity.



Figure 4 Overview of Impact Landscaping Exercise June 2024 ENLIGHT WP8

Analysis per ENLIGHT partner University

University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU)

UPV/EHU's approach to R&I impact shows continuity in its alignment with external definitions and frameworks (like WP8 and UN SDGs) across 2021 to 2025. While there is still no dedicated policy on R&I impact, the institution has bolstered its efforts by establishing a new office for social impact. This reflects a strategic evolution towards embedding impact into its institutional structure and operations, enhancing its contribution to sustainable development goals and regional innovation ecosystems.

University of Bordeaux

University of Bordeaux's approach to research and innovation (R&I) impact has evolved significantly from 2021 to 2024. Initially focused on defining impact criteria and starting an internal impact report, the university has now implemented concrete measures. These include launching projects like PUI for environmental and societal impact assessment tools, establishing an "impact project" led by a dedicated officer, and integrating impact requirements into programs like InnovationS and ACT. The institution also aims to embed environmental considerations in decision-making processes through tools like carbon impact assessment for events, showcasing a proactive shift towards comprehensive impact assessment and strategy development.

Comenius University Bratislava

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Between 2021 and 2024, Comenius University's understanding of R&I Impact remains aligned with the ENLIGHT RISE definition. Despite lacking a formal policy initially and still in 2024, plans are underway to establish guidelines by autumn. In 2021, notable practices included biochemistry breakthroughs and societal interventions. By 2024, new projects in mathematics education, refugee rights, local governance, and cross-generational entrepreneurship further emphasize the university's evolving impact across diverse fields.

University of Galway

In Q4 2021, University of Galway defined R&I impact broadly with a taxonomy-based approach, integrating it into strategic plans and embedding a culture of research impact. Initiatives like the Research Impact Toolkit and flagship goals from the University Strategic Plan 2020-2025 were highlighted.

By Q2 2024, the university refined its R&I impact definition to align with the European Commission's focus on societal and economic benefit. It introduced 'reach' and 'significance' as impact measurement concepts and launched initiatives such as the Research Impact Seminar Series. The emphasis on high-quality impact case studies continued through the Institutional Review of Research Performance (IRRP).

Overall, this evolution signifies a strategic move towards clearer definitions and improved frameworks for assessing and promoting research impact, underscoring the university's ongoing dedication to impactful research practices.

Ghent University

Ghent University's approach to research and innovation (R&I) impact has evolved from Q4 2021 to Q2 2024. Initially citing established definitions like REF and Julie Bailey's version, the university has maintained this foundational understanding while adapting to enhance accessibility. It continues to implement a flexible R&I impact framework, recently supported by an eight-year impact strategy report and ongoing organisational restructuring. New practices include developing assessment frameworks for interdisciplinary research, expanding research information systems, and integrating impact into funding initiatives like the Global Minds Fund. This evolution underscores Ghent University's commitment to advancing impactful research through strategic adaptation and innovation.

University of Göttingen

No information was received at the time of drafting this report.

University of Groningen

Between 2021 and 2024, University of Groningen (UG) has maintained a consistent approach to understanding and enhancing R&I impact. Initially guided by frameworks like VSNU and SEP 2021-2027, UG emphasized societal relevance and the integration of research with teaching. By 2024, UG has expanded its Research & Impact cluster to strategically develop talent, advance collaborative missions with societal partners, and implement impactful practices such as Theory of Change workshops. Initiatives like UMCG Impact stories and participation in NWO Impact Scout pilot continue to underscore UG's commitment to maximising research impact across its faculties and collaborations.

University of Tartu

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University of Tartu has progressed in its approach to research and innovation (R&I) impact. Initially focusing on direct research outcomes and transitioning from traditional indicators to metrics like citation rates and business contracts, the university now anticipates emphasising broader societal contributions and interdisciplinary collaboration in its upcoming strategic plan. This evolution highlights its commitment to enhancing research impact through innovative strategies and forward-looking initiatives, including the establishment of the Centre for Sustainable Development.

Uppsala University

In 2021, Uppsala University defined R&I impact as provable effects beyond academia and acknowledged the need for a formal policy, emphasising decentralised planning and a growing implementation logic.

By 2024, the university's definition of R&I impact remained valid, highlighting continued variability in approaches across departments. The absence of a formal policy persisted, with ongoing development in impact practices showcased through expanded examples and tools fostering collaboration and innovation.

ENLIGHT Toolkit for the Self-Assessment of Universities Research Impact Awareness, Literacy & Readiness

ENLIGHT Toolkit for Self-Assessment of Universities Research Impact Awareness, Literacy and Readiness

The ENLIGHT Toolkit is a self-reflection tool designed for universities to explore their research impact awareness, literacy and readiness at an institutional level. It is not a benchmarking tool but a diagnostic aid to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in the research impact environment. The toolkit is open access, with additional functionality for ENLIGHT University users. It is interactive, multiuse and allows users to track progress over time.

Review of the Self-Assessment of Universities Research Impact Awareness, Literacy and Readiness

In April 2024, links to the ENLIGHT Toolkit were circulated to all partner universities via WP8 representatives. The survey targeted individual researchers, research support staff and university management team members to investigate Impact Literacy in the research community. The survey structured around six thematic areas (Clarity, Context, Commitment, Capacities, Connectivity and Co-creation), remained unchanged from the pilot version. The period of response was indicated to remain available initially until the 30 May 2024, with a later extension to 7 June 2024.

The results of the survey are summarised in the following figures.

Self-Assessment Exercise

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	Total numbers completed the exercise	UMT	Academic/Research	Research Support
<i>University of the Basque Country</i>	164	7	152	5
<i>University of Bordeaux</i>	60	4	37	19
<i>Comenius University Bratislava</i>	9	0	7	2
<i>University of Galway</i>	66	2	54	10
<i>Ghent University</i>	17	0	8	9
<i>University of Göttingen</i>	3	1	2	0
<i>University of Groningen</i>	16	1	6	9
<i>University of Tartu</i>	16	0	12	4
<i>Uppsala University</i>	7	0	6	1
<i>Other</i>	19	3	6	10

The level of engagement from university staff has fallen since the first survey was launched in 2022.

Impact Self-assessment – uptake per ENLIGHT university

July 2022			June 2024		
UNIVERSITY	INSTITUTIONAL Survey	RESEARCHERS/ RSO Survey	UNIVERSITY	INSTITUTIONAL Survey	RESEARCHERS/ RSO Survey
U9 - UU	✓	22	OTHER	✓	19
U8 - UT	✓	12	UU	✓	7
U7 - RUG	✓	20	UT	✓	16
U6 - UGOE	✓	19	RUG	✓	16
U5 - NUIG	✓	27	UGOE	✓	3
U4 - UPV/EHU	✓	313	NUIG	✓	66
U3 - CU	✓	37	UPV/EHU	✓	164
U2 - UGENT	✓	36 (20+16)	CU	✓	9
U1 - UBx	✓	32	UGENT	✓	17
TOTAL	9	518	UBx	✓	60
			TOTAL	9	377

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Figure 5 ENLIGHT Toolkit for Self-Assessment of Universities Research Impact Awareness, Literacy and Readiness survey respondent numbers

Research Impact Awareness, Literacy & Readiness

MAIN CONCLUSIONS (I)

1. CLARITY

The majority (79%) of respondents state they do know what RI is. However, like the first survey there are multiple interpretations of RI (in/beyond academia; science communication; KT and innovation (spin-offs, patents)).

2. CONTEXT

Most respondents (82%) state RI plays a role within national/ regional research quality assessment, policy or frameworks.

3. COMMITMENT

- The majority (7/9) of ENLIGHT Universities said that RI is a strategic priority for their university; whilst RI is seen as a strategic priority by 64% of academic responders and 92% of research support staff
- 8/9 of ENLIGHT Institutional survey responders say that the University will "Greatly prioritise" around RI in the coming 5 years.
- 7/9 of ENLIGHT Institutional survey responders say there IS Institutional leadership in RI.
- All of the ENLIGHT universities now state there are "incentive & reward structures for RI".

Figure 6 ENLIGHT Toolkit for Self-Assessment of Universities Research Impact Awareness, Literacy and Readiness survey main conclusions 1

Research Impact Awareness, Literacy & Readiness

MAIN CONCLUSIONS (II)

4. CAPACITIES & RESOURCES

- 7 ENLIGHT Universities now have dedicated support and advice available on RI, previously only 2. Limited number of Universities (2) with Support & Advice for RI. 8 of the ENLIGHT Universities do have dedicated systems for RI.
- The majority of researchers/RSO respondents state NOT following a methodology for RI.
- 22% of respondents agree that their university offers support training in RI related skills. 42% of RSO state NEVER having participated in RI training.

5. CONNECTIVITY

One third of researchers/RSO respondents state they DO WORK with other teams to support RI and 42% indicated that RI activities are only "possibly/partly" aligned with University's strategy.

6. CO-CREATION

- The majority of researchers/RSO respondents (59%) state they do work with societal stakeholders in the framework of their RI activities.
- The types of collaboration according to the researchers/RSO respondents is:
 - ❖ 8% = Collaboration as potential end users of the project results or in order to share and / or co-participate in the project's dissemination tasks
 - ❖ 5% = Collaboration for data collection and/ or contrast of the project results
 - ❖ 6% = Co-design of the project, the societal stakeholders have participated in the definition of the project and its objectives
 - ❖ 8% = Co-creation throughout all phases of the project: design, implementation, preparation of results

Figure 7 ENLIGHT Toolkit for Self-Assessment of Universities Research Impact Awareness, Literacy and Readiness survey main conclusions 2

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Comparative conclusions

The second iteration of the Impact Landscaping Exercise, conducted in April 2024, demonstrated notable progress in the recognition and implementation of research impact policies and practices among ENLIGHT universities. Key findings from this deliverable include:

1. **Increased Awareness and Literacy:** There has been a significant improvement in the overall awareness and understanding of research impact among university staff. The survey results indicate that more institutions now recognise the importance of demonstrating impact beyond academia, encompassing societal, economic and environmental changes.
2. **Enhanced Institutional Policies:** Several universities have developed or refined their R&I impact policies and implementation plans. The updated responses reveal a more structured approach to integrating impact assessment into research practices. This includes dedicated policies, clear guidelines and strategic plans aimed at fostering a culture of impact-driven research.
3. **Good Practices and Examples:** The exercise identified numerous good practices in research impact across the ENLIGHT alliance. These practices serve as exemplars and provide valuable insights into effective strategies for impact generation and measurement. Sharing these practices has facilitated knowledge exchange and encouraged the adoption of successful models across institutions.
4. **Improved Toolkit Utilisation:** The ENLIGHT Toolkit for Self-Assessment has been widely adopted and utilised by partner universities. The interactive and multiuse features of the toolkit have enabled institutions to track progress over time and identify areas for improvement. The toolkit's open-access nature has also promoted its use beyond the ENLIGHT alliance, contributing to broader dissemination and impact.
5. **Challenges and Disparities:** Despite the progress, challenges remain. Some institutions still exhibit disparities in their recognition and implementation of research impact policies. Barriers such as resource limitations, lack of expertise and institutional inertia were identified as ongoing challenges that need to be addressed.
6. **Shift Towards Conformity:** There is a clear shift towards greater conformity in research impact practices across the ENLIGHT universities. The updated responses indicate a move towards more standardised approaches and shared understanding of impact assessment. This shift is expected to enhance collaborative efforts and drive collective impact at the European level.
7. **Future Direction:** The findings highlight the need for continuous improvement and adaptation. Future efforts should focus on addressing identified challenges, enhancing support mechanisms for impact assessment and fostering a culture of continuous learning

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and innovation, Collaborative initiatives within and beyond the ENLIGHT alliance will be crucial in sustaining momentum and achieving long-term impact goals.

Summary

In conclusion, the second iteration of the Impact Landscaping Exercise has provided valuable insights into the evolving landscape of research impact within the ENLIGHT alliance. The findings underscore the importance of continuous effort, collaboration and knowledge sharing in advancing the research impact agenda. The progress made so far is promising and with ongoing commitment, the ENLIGHT universities are well-positioned to lead the way in impact-driven research and innovation in Europe.