



TRANSFORMING OPEN RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION THROUGH CHARM
TORCH

DELIVERABLE D3.2 – TORCH: SET OF QUESTIONS FOR INPUT TO THE FORUM AND FOR USE BY WP8

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: SET OF QUESTIONS FOR INPUT TO THE FORUM AND FOR USE BY WP8.....	4
1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
2. METHODOLOGY.....	6
3. SUMMARY OF LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS.....	8
4. RATIONALE FOR QUESTIONS	9
4. QUESTIONS.....	11

LIST OF FIGURES & TABLES

Figure 1. Interconnectivity between the main deliverables of TORCH	7
Figure 2. Cluster 4 at the First Annual Open Forum	9
Table 1. Set of questions for input to the Forum and for use by WP8	11

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: SET OF QUESTIONS FOR INPUT TO THE FORUM AND FOR USE BY WP8

TORCH work package 3, Cross Cutting Principles, centres on understanding engagement on three aspects of Responsible Research & Innovation (RRI) across the CHARM-EU alliance institutions:

- Gendered Innovation
- Research Ethics & Integrity
- Interdisciplinary Research

This work package seeks to identify current practices in each of the institutions in each of these areas as well as identify best practices in order to produce an individualised gap analysis for each alliance member.

As the first step in this process, Deliverable 3.1 focused on mapping the current structures and practices relating to the three cross-cutting principles across the five TORCH partner institutions. The landscape analysis has provided the basis for Deliverable 3.3, a gap analysis between the best practices and the consortium's current practices. Deliverable 3.2 bridges the other two deliverables by compiling a set of questions arising from the landscape analysis as a tool for orienting the discussion at the Project's First Annual Forum. These questions and the Forum discussion will feed into Deliverable 3.2.

The list of questions is summarised as the following:

1. How do we bridge the individual Gender Equality Plans towards a common policy?
2. How do we factor intersectional issues in our GEP/s as well as in our cross-cutting principles in a meaningful way?
3. How do we best put in place a process for mutual recognition of Research Ethics approvals?
4. What would a common Good Research Practice Policy look like?
5. What does research excellence mean in CHARM-EU?
6. How can we create and support a cohesive strategy for interdisciplinary research?
7. How can we support interdisciplinary training for women and gender minorities?

1. INTRODUCTION

CHARM-EU (CHallenge-driven, Accessible, Research-based, Mobile European University) brings together University of Barcelona, Trinity College Dublin, Utrecht University, Eötvös Loránd University Budapest and University of Montpellier to develop transformative European research and educational experience through an *Erasmus+* funded European University Alliance. The same consortium forms **TORCH - Transforming Open Responsible Research and Innovation through CHARM**, in a separate but closely linked project funded by the *Horizon 2020 Science with and for Society* programme. TORCH addresses the need of CHARM-EU to develop its research dimension towards becoming a comprehensive European University.

TORCH, and all research within CHARM-EU, is founded on Responsible Research & Innovation (RRI). As we develop a common European research framework across the Alliance, our challenge is to ensure ethically fully supported interdisciplinary research while incorporating cross-cutting principles analysis into all areas of R&I processes, including career choices and opportunities as well as research project development and management.

As part of TORCH, the Work Package 3 team has been investigating the current institutional structures, practices and attitudes concerning **Gendered Innovation, Research Ethics & Integrity, and Interdisciplinarity/ Transdisciplinarity** across the Alliance. Our purpose is to fully understand the current practices of the alliance member institutions relating to these cross-cutting principles, and then, using recommendations for best practice from ongoing and finished projects, identify and better understand the gaps that exist not just at an individual alliance member level but also in terms of moving to an overall integrated alliance support structure for the future governance of the European University Alliance. The outputs of WP3 will feed into WP8 (Common Policies and Strategies) and WP9 (Action Plans and Pilots) and thus work towards promoting institutional change within and across the alliance by having the three cross-cutting principles embedded in CHARM-EU and applied across all of the Common Science agenda.

2. METHODOLOGY

The guiding principle of CHARM-EU is that the EU Future university should be a deeply interconnected University, connected to other universities and non-academic sectors; and having its internal support structures working in a connected way. CHARM-EU aims to systematically develop connected principles and action plans for better value co-creation and social engagement to deliver innovative education and research solutions to societal challenges. The three cross-cutting principles of **Gendered Innovation, Research Ethics & Integrity, and Interdisciplinarity/Transdisciplinarity** are strongly connected with four other areas of the Project: **Common R&I agenda (WP4); Cooperation with Non-academic Actors (WP5); Open Science Practices (WP6); and Citizen Science & Public Engagement (WP7).**

Our challenge is to investigate how to effect meaningful institutional change in the CHARM-EU member universities in order to enable research of the highest quality by researchers of the highest quality regardless of their personal or professional circumstances. Our approach to the current Work Package is characterised by two elements we find essential for the maximum success of our project aims:

- (1) Interconnectivity of the cross-cutting principles between each other and with the topics of WP4-7.
- (2) Making research easier.

When we call for easier research, we mean bringing down barriers for participation, avoiding unnecessary reduplication of effort and simplifying institutional processes, thus making it more attractive for our members to engage in responsible research and innovation without needing to consider complicated administrative, processual, mental or similar burdens.

The Deliverable 3.2 is focused on the Project's First Annual Forum, held online due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic and hosted by Eötvös Loránd University Budapest on 1-2 March 2022. The Forum marks the end of the first phase of the Project, bringing to close the Work Packages 3-7, and initiating the second phase, in which the future R&I dimension of the CHARM-EU alliance will be developed by our consortium, forming a series of common policies and strategies. In concert with WPs4-7, WP3 will feed our conclusions and outputs forward to WP8 (Fig. 1). The overall objective in WP8 is to elaborate a common alliance set of RRI strategies and policies in a manner that integrates the cross-cutting principles and the four other areas above. These common policies and strategies will be tested and finetuned through a set of pilots or study cases conducted in WP9 at each institutional level as well as at the level of the alliance.

Key Deliverables

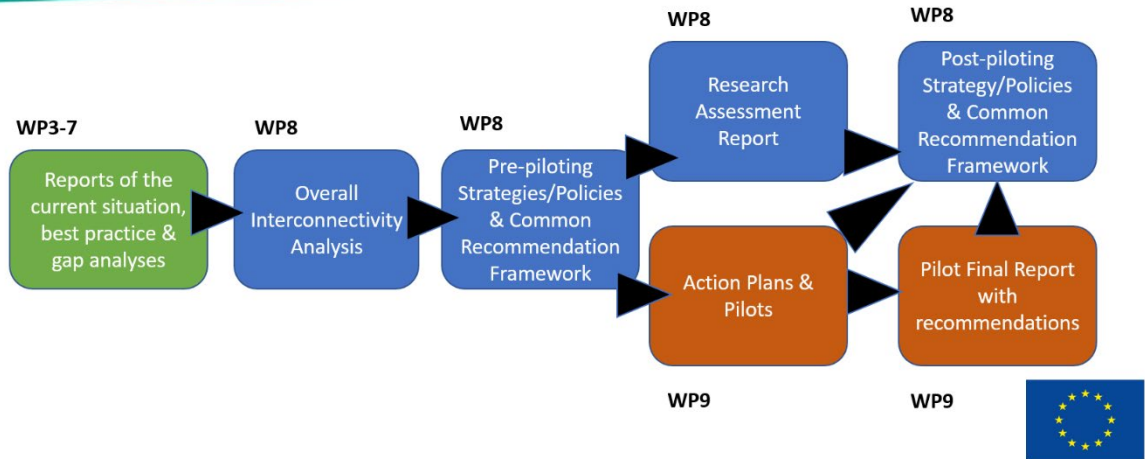


Figure 1. Interconnectivity between the main deliverables of TORCH

3. SUMMARY OF LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Our research on the current landscape concerning the cross-cutting principles across the Alliance institutions was conducted using a qualitative questionnaire, which comprised four main sections: Institutional Policies, Gendered Innovation, Research Ethics & Integrity, and Interdisciplinarity. In addition to details regarding institutional structures, policies and practices, important elements of the questionnaire concerned national and institutional regulations and connections between the principles in practice.

We found that all member institutions have taken steps to address gender issues in research, with either strong gender-related policies in place or such policies identified as a priority in institutional strategic development. That being said, in most cases, gendered research issues are assumed to largely affect solely women academics, with actions oriented towards addressing parenthood-related absences and resulting need to boost research performance by specific means. While LGBTQI+ support is stated outright by most member institutions, the level of support currently available in this regard varies. Only two of the member institutions reported current or developing policies on the expression, recording and facilitating of gender minorities such as non-binary. As a rule, gender issues tend to be considered on their own, with little intersectional work concerning other underprivileged groups integrated, although awareness of the growing importance of intersectional considerations exists.

Similarly, Research Ethics & Integrity was reported to be a priority for all institutions, with policies already well established or under development. Generally, ethics review across the board was reported to be distributed to the local level by way of Faculties and/or Schools, with Institution-level bodies typically addressing Research Integrity and potential misconduct issues. The level of support allocated to Research Ethics & Integrity in terms of human resources varies greatly. A need for easily accessible, continuous training on Research Ethics & Integrity at all career levels was identified across all five institutions of the alliance.

While all institutions agree on the importance of interdisciplinary research, particularly in the context of addressing global and complex problems, a centrally directed effort to promote and champion interdisciplinarity seems to be missing across the Alliance. Interdisciplinary initiatives are organised and run at a local level, through research institutes, hubs, other groups, and certain taught programmes. The level of dedicated research support with specific expertise on interdisciplinary research and funding varies from institution to institution. As interdisciplinary research has the potential for a great deal of impact, it has a possible role to play in future assessments of research excellence. However, while each institution states research excellence as a high priority, none define what is understood by it, or what is expected of researchers required to pursue it. In these circumstances, standards for recruitment, retention and promotion, as well as standards for fundable and publishable (i.e. “high quality”) research may follow traditional discipline-rooted lines. Further, traditional quantitative research assessment and evaluation tends to favour uninterrupted research career paths, bibliometric indicators and grant success, which is not necessarily reflective of the true impact of the research or the quality of the researcher. As a researcher's career development is typically based on the evaluation of their research excellence, we suggest that in order to address the gender gaps in research, one untapped route would be ensuring that training on interdisciplinary research is co-designed with and for women and gender minority researchers.

4. RATIONALE FOR QUESTIONS

Deliverable 3.1 presented a landscape analysis of the current policies and practices across the institutions of the Alliance. Our task in compiling D3.2 was to identify gaps in the practices and policies of individual institutions, as well as in the context of the entire Alliance. These gaps will be presented in detail in D3.3: Best Practice Development and Gap Analysis. In its discussion of the gaps, best practice, and any recommendations we wish to make the third deliverable of WP3 will be informed by discussions at the First Annual Forum. In addition to these discussions taking place across the Forum programme, WP3 held its dedicated cluster session as part of the Open Forum on 2 March 2022 (Fig. 2).

Cluster 4: Cross-cutting principles to address a transformative R&I Agenda

Developing a common European research framework in different countries and cultures and across a number of different disciplines requires addressing the challenges of ensuring ethically fully supported interdisciplinary research while incorporating cross-cutting principles analysis into all areas of R&I processes including career choices and opportunities as well as research project development and management. Having established our research strengths, we ask, how can we make our research even better?

Chair: Gemma Marfany, TORCH (CHARM-EU). University of Barcelona

Rapporteur: Jędrzej Olejniczak. FORTHEM

Speakers:

- Lorraine Leeson. TORCH (CHARM-EU). Trinity College Dublin.
- Till Ansgar Baumhauer. Project Speaker & Leader. EU4ART_differences. EU4ART
- Mireille Stijns. Leading of the community-engaged research and innovation (CERI) work package in YUFERING (YUFE)
- Nuria Bautista Puig. R&D Technical Support at YUFERING and researcher at Carlos III University of Madrid.

Figure 2. Cluster 4 at the First Annual Open Forum

To help facilitate the conversation, we identified a number of questions and discussion points, which were based on the gaps and needs we had discovered as a result of the landscape analysis. These questions were distributed to the Cluster 4 speakers in advance of the session. During the cluster, each panel member made a short presentation related to the cross-cutting principles. The presentations were followed by a panel discussion.

As we had a limited amount of time for our dedicated cluster session, our priorities for D3.2 were **to compile the major gaps and recommendations in a set of questions that covered all three cross-**

cutting principles, were directly linked to the main issues identified by us, and at the same time were broad enough to allow for open and candid discussion. The questions were divided under the headings of each cross-cutting principle, but it was understood and expected that due to the interconnectivity between the three principles and the four related areas, discussion was likely to include elements from all three principles as well as the other areas at any given point.

In D3.1, we identified the following priority recommendations arising from the landscape analysis:

- Work towards a common CHARM-EU Gender Equality Plan (GEP)
- Work towards having mutual recognition of Research Ethics approvals across the alliance
- Work towards having a common CHARM-EU Good Research Practice Policy for students and staff
- Work towards developing a common framework for supporting interdisciplinary research across the alliance.

We used these recommendations as a starting point for the set of questions in D3.2.

4. QUESTIONS

Table 1. Set of questions for input to the Forum and for use by WP8

1. Gender

- 1.1. 1.1 It has been suggested that the CHARM-EU Alliance should have a Gender Equality Plan for the Alliance as well as for each of the individual institutions. How do we bridge the individual GEPs towards a common policy that works for all of the institutions?
- 1.2. Intersectionality has been identified as an essential element by the European Commission. How do we factor intersectional issues in our GEP/s as well as in our cross-cutting principles in a meaningful way? What are the barriers?

2. Research Ethics & Integrity

- 2.1. We have identified as a major issue the lack of mutual recognition of Research Ethics approvals across the Alliance. How do we best put one in place?
- 2.2. We propose to create a Good Research Practice policy/document for the Alliance. What would it look like, and how would it differ from individual institutional policies/documents?

3. Interdisciplinary/Transdisciplinary Research

- 3.1. Each of our institutions talks about research excellence, but none provide a clear definition of what is meant by that. What does research excellence mean in CHARM-EU? What should it mean in the future? How do we assess what is excellent research? Who has the opportunities to do excellent research?
 - 3.2. Each of the Alliance institutions reported a gap in cohesive, centrally-driven effort to promote and support interdisciplinary research. How can we, as an Alliance, create and support a cohesive, structured strategy for interdisciplinary research? (To include, but not be limited to networking, matchmaking, administrative and development support.) What are the barriers to this?
 - 3.3. How can we particularly support inter/transdisciplinary training for women and gender minorities?
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