



EMRC Science Policy Briefing on health research classification approaches

Beverley Sherbon

Medical Research Council

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Background – EMRC & Science Policy Briefings

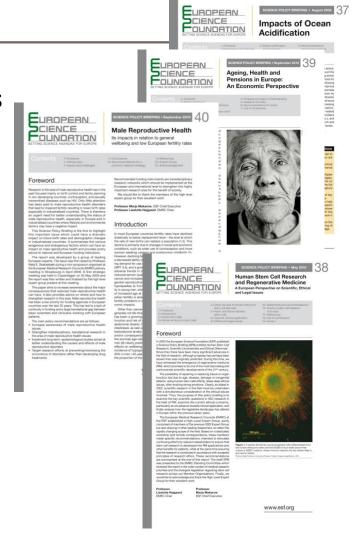
- European Medical Research Councils (EMRC) is the Membership Organisation for 37 medical research councils in 30 European countries under the ESF.
- Its mission is to promote innovative medical research and its clinical application towards improved human health.
- EMRC has a broad remit and offers authoritative strategic advice for policy making, research management, ethics and better health services.
- Activities include:
 - Science Policy (White Papers, Science Policy Briefings, Position Papers)
 - Forward Looks
 - Exploratory Workshops (emerging fields)
 - EUROCORES and Research Networking Programmes
 - Research Conferences

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Science Policy Briefings

- Address science policy issues of key concern to ESF Member Organisations and the wider scientific community
- Draw on the advice and expertise of researchers
- Provide consensus on strategy recommendations to policy makers
- Recommendations are intended to trigger targeted efforts by relevant stakeholders: ESF, MOs, governments, EC, EP, other international agencies, industry and academia

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Background cont.

- Working Group 3 of the ESF Members Organisation Forum on Evaluation has two strands of work:
 - Classification and comparative analysis of portfolios
 - Approaches for output collection and analysis
- Classification strand
 - Workshop to identify and discuss the approaches to classification used across the Member Organisations
 - Expert group meeting in March 2011 with broader participants (European Commission, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), World Health Organisation)
 - To facilitate production of a Science Policy Briefing (SPB) on Health Research Portfolio Classification.

SPB on Health Research Classification Systems -Overview

- Introduction & benefits
- What are the key challenges?
- What are the key characteristics of successful research classification systems?
- Recommendations

Introduction & benefits

Research organisations require high quality approaches for the classification of research portfolios for various reasons, these include:

- to monitor and communicate progress against strategy
- to track changes in research portfolios over time
- to manage the application process (assigning application to a board or for reviewer selection)
- to produce research portfolio statistics
- to structure research information systems

Research efforts are global, and increasingly research organisations want to co-ordinate their funding with other organisations, to jointly fund research and benchmark their progress internationally.

Benefits of a common approach to classification of research portfolios:

- Communication
- Identification of new opportunities
- Comparable analysis
- Collaboration
- Efficiency

Key Challenges

- There is no single ideal classification approach
- Difference in operational processes across funding organisations
- Overlap between scientific areas/inter-disciplinary research
- Training and documented guidance
- Resources / overheads
- Unit of analysis
- Quality assurance / quality control

Classification systems currently used in health research

- OECD Frascati
- Australian & New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC)
- US National Institutes of Health Research, Condition, and Disease Categorization System (NIH RCDC)
- Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)
- The Common Scientific Outline (CSO)
- UK Health Research Classification System (HRCS)
- G-Finder
- Research Organisation specific ones

... and of course many systems for other areas of research!

Key Characteristics of successful research classification systems

What does an ideal one look like?

- Simple and relevant
- Fit for purpose
- Consistent over time
- Common between research organisations
- multiple dimensions
- Flexible

Recommendations

- 1. Continued sharing of expertise in this area should be encouraged.
- 2. Common approaches for the classification of research portfolios should be sought.
- 3. Use of the HRCS should be encouraged as the leading approach for comparison and joint analysis of specifically *health* research portfolio information.
- 4. A common solution for classifying research portfolios in disciplines outside of medical research should be sought.

Recommendations

- 5. Methods should be explored to translate portfolio information between classification approaches.
- 6. Central support is needed to manage and co-ordinate a common approach.
- 7. Methodological developments are needed to reduce the cost of classification and increase flexibility.

SPB on Health Research Classification Systems - timeline

- Currently awaiting final comments and being redrafted.
- Formal external peer review
- EMRC Standing Committee approval
- ESF Chief Executive approval
- Final version should be ready in November.



Questions? Comments?

beverley.sherbon@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk