# SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION (STSM) SCIENTIFIC REPORT

This report is submitted for approval by the STSM applicant to the STSM coordinator

Action number: CA15137, European Network For Research Evaluation In The Social Sciences And The Humanities (ENRESSH)
STSM title: Research and dissemination patterns of SSH institutes and/or researchers (WP1)
STSM start and end date: 15/01/2018 to 03/02/2018
Grantee name: Agnė Girkontaitė

**Purpose of the STSM:**

To advance the understanding of knowledge production and dissemination in the SSH (Task 1 of WG1).

**Work during the STSM included:**

1. Preparing of methodology of the research on social sciences and humanities researchers' output and dissemination patterns: deciding on the cases, discussing on sources and the coding framework of quantitative data, preparing of interview guidelines and testing it.
2. Preparing for the analysis the repository of the internal outputs' reporting tool of FORS.
3. Starting to collect information from other sources for quantitative analysis (Annual Reports of FORS, FORS webpage and Web of Science).
4. Conducting three interviews in FORS.
5. Discussing on preliminary insights from analysis of collected quantitative data and interviews.
6. General discussions on research evaluation in social sciences and humanities in Switzerland and Lithuania.

All the work was carried in close collaboration with STSM coordinator Michael Ochsner, which was very valuable for the grantee, in order to get more knowledge in research methodology and research evaluation contexts.

**Main results of the STSM**

***<u>Description of the methodology of research</u>***

**Goal:**

To capture, which research outputs are not visible and why.

**Tasks:**

1. to collect what is shown in various sources (Web of Science, official reports, CVs, internal outputs' reporting tool)
2. to analyse differences in outputs reported between sources, also by institution, personal characteristics (gender, status, work profile) and change in years.
3. to get the picture of which research outputs are not visible (interviews)
4. to understand why some outputs are made visible by researchers but others are not (interviews)

<u>Case studies:</u> (1) FORS at the University of Lausanne, (2) Institute of Sociology and Social Work at the Vilnius University. [note: Institute of Sociology and Social Work is new in an administrative sense and is being established in the period of research. It is formed out of two departments – Sociology and Social Work – within the VU Faculty of Philosophy. For the time period chosen for the study (2012-2016), they were still two separate departments but they were involved in common projects and lecturing. So, while being (still) separate entities, they are quite connected and their merger into a new institute does not change work practices significantly and make them a suitable case for the study.]

Criteria for choosing the cases:

1. For international comparison – different countries in the context of research evaluation: Switzerland as one of the leading countries in Europe, with a long tradition of research evaluation, and Lithuania as quite new in this context, with a lot of changes in research evaluation strategies and more in a lower position in the European context of research evaluation.
2. Quite similar research fields and size of the institutes.
3. Combination of the perspectives of insider and outsider. One of the researchers works at FORS since 2013, the other one studied in VU Department of Sociology, entered PhD studies in 2011 and works there since 2013; both with a deep knowledge, what is done in their institutions and quite familiar with the researchers who work there, so both are able to provide insider's knowledge and understanding of the unofficial side of their institution, which would not be accessible to outsiders. At the same time, both of the researchers have no knowledge about the other institute, so as outsiders they are able to question preliminary assumptions and common sense of the insider's perspective, to look at the data more objectively, to provide insights of looking from the outside, thus enabling the discussion of choices regarding research and interpretations.

The case of arts and humanities is still being discussed.

Cases are studied using a mixed methods approach – analysing research output of these institutes both in quantitative and qualitative perspectives, using all possible sources for research output reporting and additionally conducting qualitative interviews with researchers. Quantitative and qualitative analysis inform each other in all stages of the research: the overview of possible repositories and their structures and deeper analysis of individual output items provide a scheme for quantitative analysis and possibilities to interpret quantitative data on reporting; insights from quantitative analysis of reporting lead to questions to ask in interviews and to the selection of informants for interviews; the interview analysis gives further possibilities for interpretation of quantitative data.

The time window for the output analysis is chosen because of data availability: a 5-years time window spanning from 2012 to 2016. Output of all researchers who worked during at least a part of this period is taken into account.

Informants for interviews are chosen according to insights from quantitative analysis of reporting, quota based on the variety of their publication patterns: (1) high number of outputs, also some covered in Web of Science; (2) high number of outputs, but not covered in Web of Science; (3)

middle number of outputs; (4) low number of outputs. Balance in gender, status (junior vs senior researchers, group leaders vs 'workers') and work type (data, lecturing, research oriented) also are kept.

Interviews with fluent English speakers are performed in English, interviews with non-English speakers in their native or work language, and then summaries and syntagms in English on relevant ideas are provided.

***Preliminary insights***

**Quantitative and qualitative output analysis** (50 persons, 641 output items for FORS)

There are some differences in the strategies of reporting in the institutional level – whether there is a dedicated space for reporting and clear regulations, how and what to report. It leads to different reporting behaviour and, probably, to differences in approval of work (both from the evaluator's and the researcher's perspective).

The internal outputs' reporting tool of FORS enables to record very diverse outputs, including presentations (also non-scholarly), reports, lecturing, media for non-academic audience. Also, there is a tool – and requirement – to report consultations, as it is one of the main tasks of FORS. So this might lead to differences in the variety of reported outputs between the two institutes under analysis. (This would be tested in further analysis)

Nevertheless, the institutional repository does not always provide clear guidelines for reporting. It leads to standard and consistent reporting across different sources of peer-reviewed journal articles but differences of reporting might be found in other kinds of outputs: book chapters and editions, presentations, reports, media for non-academic audience. These differ in definitions of type (for example, some newspaper articles are recorded as journal articles by researchers, but as other media in the Annual Report; some lectures are recorded as presentations by researchers and put in a separate section for teaching in the Annual Report), in definitions of authorship (are editors included as authors or not, who is defined as the main author, are all the authors and contributors mentioned) and in decision to report or not in a particular source.

Those differences are interesting not so much as a tool to count „misinterpretations" and „incomplete" reporting in an objective sense, but as a way to understand differences in subjective interpretations, that is, which of the outputs have more importance for researchers themselves and in what sense. For example, misreporting or non-reporting of certain kinds of outputs might mean that these outputs are considered as less important or less relevant for the context of the institution. Also, it might inform about limitations of the reporting system, such as troubles to fit a certain output into a certain form, a trade-off of time needed to report and perceived importance of an output.

The pilot research of reporting at FORS in 2016 and 2015 showed some interesting tendencies.

Approx. half of all reported items are presentations, 12-18 % articles in peer-reviewed journals, 5-16 % books or book sections; also 5-7 % of records are defined as „newspaper articles" and might be counted as media for other audiences; reports are rarely reported.

An analysis of the differences between the internal outputs' reporting tool of FORS and the Annual Report of FORS reveals that in the internal reporting there are 17-23 % not reported items, while in the Annual Report there are 4-7 % of not reported items, which means, that it is the researchers themselves who tend to not report certain outputs that are important for the institution. Items are excluded in the Annual Report usually for some technical reason (for example, the item was published next year) or because it is a so-called „other presentation" or „other media" – for external audiences – when the list of only selected items is provided in the Annual Report, and even in this case, it amounts to 1-2 items per year (although we do not know how much of these are not visible at all, that is, reported neither by the researcher nor by the institution). Items excluded in the internal reporting – that is, those provided by the institution but not by the researchers themselves – usually are presentations (20-25% of presentations are excluded), specific FORS outputs (FORS Working Paper Series and FORS Lunch Seminars) and sometimes reports and other media. Usually, non-reporting of a particular type of output is linked to a person – researchers thus differ not only in output patterns but also in reporting patterns. This might indicate what is considered as important (to report) and what is not. All journal articles, books and book sections are reported in both sources (with two exceptions; might be more, when items from Web of Science will be collected).

These are the main questions for the interview analysis – what is not reported at all and why?

**Preliminary insights from the first interviews (3 informants)**

Preliminary insights from interviews already present some interesting explanations to these questions. Publications in peer-reviewed journals are the first thing coming to a researcher's mind, when asked about work outputs. It is considered important – you need to do peer-reviewed publications and report them because of your recognition, for your career as a researcher. Also concern about publishing not enough is noticed.

But when asked about everyday work, researchers mention various other kinds of outputs they create: data, internal reports for team members, reports and instructions on data for users, presentations, consultations, some papers that are not yet published (and it is not clear, if they will be, although they might be considered as interesting), reviews, appearances in media. Reporting on these outputs differ according to the audience. It is especially evident when researchers talk about their CVs – that you write CV for a particular reason and include those achievements, which you consider important for that particular reason. For example, one researcher does not see administrative work she does at FORS as important, but if she would apply for an administrative position, she thinks it would be important to mention.

Time constraints in reporting are also of concern. As one of the researchers said, you cannot always care about reporting, you have to do your actual work. So, those places for reporting that are more convenient to use or those that relieve them from additional work are liked the most, for example, Research Gate: they collect information for you, you just have to approve it, it is very easy.

One of the most interesting insights was the expressed distinction between everyday work with data (which is the main task of FORS) and research work – publications in peer-reviewed journals are considered important for the second part but usually it takes time off the first. This contradiction has to be dealt with in some ways, either by trying to find how questions regarding data can lead to the publication in the area of research interests or by spending free time after work on research goals (which is not approved). This is not only a question for an individual researcher, but also for a team – how tasks are divided, who takes on „invisible“ work, who takes on making publications, is it fair – it is important to pay attention to this, as informants state.

It does not mean, that this kind of „invisible“ work with data is seen as not important – it is important, it is their work in this institution, even if it is not recognised enough. Informants constantly stress the value of their data and instructions for users who usually are other researchers; and one informant even states that it is not so important to be visible as long as your data are good and used – that is another form of recognition.

Nevertheless, this distinction of two work types – the ordinary everyday work with data and the additional work on peer-reviewed publications – has implications on the identity of a researcher, whether a person sees herself as a researcher or not. Researchers tend to perceive themselves while applying this scheme of visibility – I am a researcher only if I publish, where the word "publish" means "publish in peer-reviewed journals". That means, work, which is valuable and useful for researchers but is not visible in standard forms of academic recognition because of that non-visibility tends to be in conflict with aspirations of being a researcher.

**Further work for research:**

1. To finish collecting data on reporting in FORS (Web of Science of people, who do not work in FORS anymore, Annual Reports of 2013, 2012, personal webpages in FORS, consultation database, CVs)
2. To decide on sources of reporting in VU Institute of Sociology and Social Work and collect data from these.
3. To do 1-2 more interviews in FORS and all (4-5) interviews in VU.
4. To standardise quantitative data for coding scheme.
5. To analyse differences in reporting patterns.
6. To analyse interviews.
7. To compare all the material between institutes.

**Future collaborations:**

1. Presentation of the research results in the Training school of ENRESSH
2. Publication (in peer-reviewed journal) on knowledge production and dissemination patterns in SSH

Also presentations in scientific conferences and publication of results in Lithuanian language for Lithuanian scholars are considered.