



U-Multirank

Stakeholder meeting

Hotel Renaissance, Brussels

05 November 2010

Programme

11.00 – 11.15 *Welcome* (Frank Ziegele)

11.15 – 12.15 *Presentation ‘Feedback Indicator selection’* (Frans van Vught)

12.15 – 12.30 *Presentation on ‘Entering the Pilot Phase’* (Elisabeth Epping)

12.30 - 13.30 Lunch break

13.30 – 14.00 *Presentation ‘U-Multirank bibliometrics: preliminary results and discussion’*
(Robert Tijssen, Julie Callaert)

14.00 – 16.00 *Presentation on how to present the ranking information* (Frans Kaiser & Gero Federkeil)

The goal of the meeting was to collect the views of various stakeholders on progress made so far in the U-Multirank project and to hear their views on the plans of the project team with respect to the tools for presenting (and visualising) the outcomes of the project.

More than thirty participants attended the meeting. The presentations by the U-Multirank project team are available on the [website](#).

Below is a summary of the day’s discussions.

SH = StakeHolder, comments are numbered in sequence

STATEMENTS IN CAPITALS: responses from the project team

I. Selection of indicators

After the introduction by Frank Ziegele, Frans van Vught outlines the stages in the project and the consultative approach taken ([see presentation](#)). He mentions that the project has now left its design phase and is entering the pilot phase, where the data are collected from the institutions. There will be an Interim report available ([on the U-Multirank website](#)) soon. He presents the situation with respect to the selection of indicators and stresses the idea that SH comments will be taken on board (after the pilot test) in the final report. It is also stressed that in the end U-Multirank will be user-driven; no “league” table of institutions that aggregates scores on all dimensions will be produced.

An overview of indicators is presented with the (green) ones that are included in the pilot and (in red) the ones that are out. It is stressed that now is the time where SHs need to voice their concerns (if any) in particular on the indicators that were dropped from the list during the preceding months where consultations and pre-testing took place.

The pre-test was done for 11 institutions. Three addressed all data needs. Eight provided feedback on indicators. Additional comments were received as well.

Below is a summary of SH comments and project team responses to indicators in each of the five dimensions.

**** FOCUSED INSTITUTIONAL RANKINGS ****

FIR – TEACHING AND LEARNING

SH 1: The indicator ‘expenditure on teaching’ should be included as it is an important indicator for universities of applied sciences to show their commitment to teaching. The project team responds that this indicator is EASY TO BRING IN AGAIN AS THE QUESTIONNAIRE COMPRISES THE RELEVANT QUESTION.

SH 2: The indicators in this dimension are partly input indicator. There are doubts about the indicator interdisciplinarity of programs. WHETHER THE CONCERNS ARE JUSTIFIED WILL BE REVEALED IN THE PILOT.

SH3: Expenditure on teaching: is not an indicator for quality of teaching at all. It depends on the subject mix of an institution. If this mix comprises a lot of sciences and engineering, research expenditure will be relatively high and as a consequence expenditure on teaching will be relatively low. Therefore this indicator is probably more relevant for Field Based ranking.

SH4: The ratio between teaching staff and students may resolve expressed issues with expenditure on teaching (IS IN FIELD BASED)

SH5: There is no indicator that is *really* about the *quality* of teaching (WE USE PROXIES; LEARNING OUTCOME INDICATORS AS CURRENTLY BEING DEVELOPED IN AHELO ARE UNAVAILABLE) – student feedback would be an option (IS IN FIELD BASED RANKING).

FIR – RESEARCH

SH 1: why only ‘within country joint publications’? → INTERNATIONAL JOINT PUBLICATIONS ARE IN THE DIMENSION INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION

SH 2: art-related output: can we be promised that it will be in after the testing phase? IT IS INCLUDED IN TESTING PHASE. CULTURAL PRIZES AND AWARDS ARE INCLUDED.

SH3: number of post-doc positions – why not PhD? (IS ANOTHER INDICATOR)

FIR – KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

SH 1: Suggestion to broaden patent criterion to copyright (IS IN INCOME INDICATOR. INCOME FROM COPYRIGHTS IS ALSO INCLUDED IN U-MAP.

SH 2: Problems with input indicator “Size of TTO”, it is context dependent as it depends on its organisation – it is suggested to drop this indicator? IT SHOWS AN INSTITUTION’S SUPPORT FOR KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER.

SH 3: Share that concern – organizational issue?

SH 4: Comparison of bibliometric indicator / dependence on the size of the institution – normalise by size.

SH 5: Cooperative research contracts with industry: expresses knowledge transfer better than 3rd party funding and patents. IS IN FIELD-BASED.

SH 6: Number of staff involved in TT; not just TTO; but also centrally or even in the faculty

SH 7: More general question regarding the validity / relevance of SH opinions: important to understand who the SHs are that were involved in the process and expressed their opinions. Transparency would be appreciated (OK FOR LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS, BUT EXPRESSIONS VOICED BY EACH O F THEM CANNOT BE TRACED / REPORTED ON - LIST WILL SOON BE ON THE WEBSITE)

FIR – INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION

This is largely unexplored territory, although there are some country-level statistics.

SH 1: Where is the number of international students enrolled in the program? (IS IN U-MAP AND IN FIELD-BASED RANKING)

SH 2: International PhD graduation rate is really important, should not be thrown out

SH3: Programs in English is out. REPLACED BY PROGRAMS IN OTHER THAN NATIONAL LANGUAGE.

FIR – REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Is very much unexplored territory. Data availability poses challenges. For instance: Regional economic impact is out.

No comments by SH.

****** FIELD BASED ******

FBR – TEACHING AND LEARNING

There are long lists of indicators, expressing student satisfaction.

SH 1: Graduate earnings was voted out for institutional level, but should be kept in for field level. – There is no indicator on labour market success (except unemployment). Students must feel prepared for labour market and this is an important aspect for student satisfaction. CONSUMER MOTIVE FOR PARTICIPATION IS EXPRESSED THROUGH STUDENT SATISFACTION QUESTIONS.

SH 2: Student satisfaction rate *during* versus *after* education; education is continuing service, ongoing also after the end exam (until retirement, as it were)

SH 3: Support that suggestion; in many countries, such surveys “after graduation” exist (WE CANNOT ADD ANOTHER QUESTIONNAIRE)

SH 4: Student satisfaction concerning artistic infrastructure? (WE LOOK AT ENGINEERING & BUSINESS HERE, BUT IN OTHER FIELD-BASED RAKINGS A QUESTION ON INFRASTRUCTURE WOULD BE INCLUDED)

SH 5: Inclusion of issues relevant for employability – what is it? (FURTHER EXPLAINED IN FIELD-BASED GLOSSARY WHEN IT BECOMES AVAILABLE)

FBR – RESEARCH

No comments

FBR – KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

No comments

FBR – INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION

SH 1: International Doctoral Graduation rate should be left in here also (cf. institutional ranking). It shows attractiveness of PhD studies (DIFFICULT TO GET DATA)

SH 2: Does not agree with the suggestion to keep the indicator in.

SH 3: What are international students? THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED THEIR ENTRY QUALIFICATION ABROAD.

SH 4: Internationalization of programs: accurate operationalization depends on fields. BASED ON SET OF UNDERLYING QUESTIONS COVERING VARIOUS ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONALIZATION.

SH 5: agrees with SH 1

SH 6: Educational program in English is left out – and no indicator on program in foreign language (INCLUDED IN 'INTERNATIONALISATION OF PROGRAM'; THERE ARE SUBQUESTIONS; BUT NOT INCLUDED IN SLIDE)

FBR – REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

No comments

SH: Fundamental question on use of indicators when describing institutional profiles – how to come to rankings? (TOOL TO BE DEVELOPED IS SUPPOSED TO BE 100% USER-DRIVEN – see also discussion in afternoon)

II. Pilot Phase (institutions involved)

(see [Powerpoint slides](#))

Three questionnaires were sent out to 122 institutions: 70 to institutions from the EU; 13 to other European (non-EU) institutions, and 39 to institutions outside of Europe. The project team is continuing its efforts to encourage more institutions to join – in particular from China, Russia, the US, Hungary, Spain and the UK. For the Field-based ranking: *Business* is represented in 51 institutions; *Mechanical Engineering* in 46 and *Electrical Engineering* in 46 as well. Deadlines for returning data: 20 December.

SH 1: Any need to motivate universities / incentivize them? Do they join on a voluntary basis?
(BENCHMARKING DATA WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS; THEY ARE PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW RANKINGS; BUT NO MONETARY PAYMENTS)

SH 2: List of institutions? (SEE [WEBPAGE](#))

SH 3: Any ideas on the future; after the feasibility study? THAT ISSUE IS PART OF THE PROJECT AND WILL BE ADDRESSED IN THE FINAL REPORT.

SH 4: List of 122 universities: no 'general' German universities; only Univ. of Applied Sciences (THEY ARE IN PROCESS)

HARD TIME ATTRACTING US INSTITUTIONS: INPUT / TIPS FROM STAKEHOLDERS?

III. Bibliometrics

(see [Powerpoint slides](#))

Bibliometric data (on research publications & patents) are taken by the project team from existing databases, but institutions are needed for the quality assurance of data. Publication data are from the Web of Science database. For the fields of Business and Engineering we use groupings of journals. The delineation of fields is always problematic – so is the delineation of the institution (university).

Data are presented for four institutions – showing total publication output, national, international, public-private and regional publications. Verification procedures are carried out and sensitivity analyses to test reliability of data and patterns.

For the patents data we use EPO/Patstat database and US PTO. The period covered for patent applications is 2000-2009. National regulation affects patenting activity, and regulations change. This should be taken into account when interpreting indicators on academic patenting. Remark: not all patents with university inventors are owned by the university, so we miss out part of patenting activity. Data on patents that have been licensed out are not available. We collect some of this info from institutions through questionnaire

SH1: Indicate what difference is between this proposed approach and that of Times H E ranking?
Thomson is involved in both. WE HAVE CO-PUBLICATIONS TO SHOW COLLABORATIVE PATTERNS.

SH 2: To what extent does “international publication” automatically mean that it is published in English?
(MOSTLY, CONSIDERING THE WEB OF SCIENCE COVERAGE OF MOSTLY ENGLISH JOURNALS)

SH 3: Data on the practical use of patents? (WOULD IMPLY THE NEED FOR LICENSING DATA – NOT
AVAILABLE IN SECONDARY SOURCES, REQUIRES SURVEY; GRANTS versus APPLICATIONS).

IV. Presentation and visualisation of results

Ideas on using and applying the data collected are presented (see [Powerpoint slides](#)). General aspects: we will not print our ranking; it will be of an interactive character. The question is: how much guidance for the user in making his/her ranking. Tables are a central element in rankings; the users of our ranking can assemble them themselves in an interactive/personalized way (such as in [CHE’s MyRanking tool](#)) based on the user’s interest in particular performance indicators. Detailed info on institution and program will be available as background/context.

Visualisation

The visualisation is an important element (but not the only) in the ranking. It provides an ‘At a Glance’ overview. Four models are presented. These are :

1. the U-Map model (the sunburst chart),
2. Starfish (five rays representing the dimensions, somehow aggregated)
3. Coloured bars (showing individual indicators per dimension in colours)
4. String of Pearls (with circles differing in size representing the categorised scores per dimension/indicator)

The discussion was on the stakeholders’ feelings about the four models. For the *GRAPHIC MODELS* we use the following Reference codes: (1) U-Map like - (2) Starfish - (3) Coloured Bars - (4) String of Pearls

SH reactions:

SH 1: (3) not nice, no immediate image; (2) better, but meagre – so doubt between (1) and (4)

SH 2: same (1) and (4)

SH 3: (1) and (3) because they don’t aggregate – some users will not like to have aggregated scores

SH 4: (4) big red circle: seems to imply a bad thing (being red) – graphically, preference for the starfish

SH 5: (4) In some areas, there are 10 indicators, in others, there are only 5. How does that influence the result? It should not! (IT DOES NOT)

SH 6: problems with e.g. (4) – comparison between 20 institutes becomes complicated; why not just provide tables – graphic models appear much too simplified.

Project team: We will avoid confusion with colour use (as dimension identifiers versus as indication of score / rank position).

SH 7: (4) gives impression that university C is much better than other institutes. People will intuitively aggregate – so why not doing that yourself a priori? Preference for (4), by the way, exactly because of this reason. (1) does not give ranking, but someone will take the underlying numbers and create that ranking anyway; so why not present it yourself?

SH 8: If you are considering graphical presentation, you should consider the different ways of using the data / different user demands. They probably require different ways of graphic presentations. – How do you target different groups of users you are thinking about within this project?

SH 9: All 4 are very appealing, painting a quite good image of institutions. But: users must understand all the needs that are being addressed and process underlying information. Therefore, help the users that have less capacity to process that information. Difficult to address all different users with one single graphic model.

SH 10: How often do you envisage this ranking (or rather: update of underlying data and indicators) will be done? Annually? Will you be able to monitor changes? (CYCLE OF ABOUT 3 TO 4 YEARS MAY BE APPROPRIATE).

SH11: Rankings (categorisation) depends on sample. One extra institution can change the score.

VOTING was carried out to assemble opinions. The outcome was as follows:

Pearls: 3 votes

Starfish: 1 vote

Bars: 2 votes

U-Map like: all remaining (more than 20 votes)

The U-Map-like visualisation turned out to be the clear ‘winner’. The project team stressed that visualizations allow users to drill down on specific dimensions. Visualisations are a start of a further search for information.

User driven or user guided

In the next presentation/discussion the topic was how to compare 'comparable' institutions. The U-Map tool (showing *activity* profiles) is the start for the ranking – as it allows for the selection of institutions that meet particular criteria. This is followed by the ranking (showing *performance* profiles) as such.

In the comparison ('ranking') of institutional performance profiles there is a choice between two options:

1. A flexible, user-driven approach allowing the building of user-defined profiles
2. A guided approach, allowing for choice between pre-defined profiles

In the first case, the users are assumed to be able to select the profiles themselves without imposing weights for specific indicators. In the second, the challenge for the project team is to identify profiles that go beyond familiar profiles such as the research university.

The discussion focused on the choice of tools, as presented in two pillars:

'Left pillar' = user-driven;

'Right pillar' = predefined profiles

SH 1: Regarding the left pillar (User-defined profiles): do you intend the option for user-defined indicator choice and weighting?

SH 2: Vote for left only

SH 3: Me too, this was the original intention of the project.

SH 4: Vote for left one

SH 5: By defining groups, you are already making a choice in how you can compare. It is a methodological issue throughout the project. It would be good – from a scientific point of view – to trace how indicators are used (overlap and differences between U-Map and U-Multirank).

SH 6: Looking at right pillar, big problem on validity of categorization of user groups. Left pillar: navigation tool; its use depends on what the tool is for and who is using it. It might not work for two reasons: 1. It is not reflecting the institutional map; 2. Students may not know how to use it. Who is to blame / to be held accountable for wrong choices, based on the U-Multirank criteria?

SH 7: Adequate level of transparency and maturity of students will solve this issue (raised by SH 6). This issue favours the user-defined profile even more.

SH 8: Preference for left one. Crucial for the whole success of endeavour: does it appeal to the community? For reasons of reducing complexity: there might be some sense in testing a set of predefined profiles (complementary to the user-defined ones).

SH 9: Agree! SH works at political level, they are basing themselves on lists, which are easy to use and to communicate. So urging for complementary approach of user defined but also list-wise predefined rankings. E.g. strategic goal for Denmark is to be in the "Top 7 in Europe".

SH 10: It is not a tool for the politicians, but for the public also.

SH 11: "Comparing apples to apples and oranges to oranges": the user-defined profiles are the only way of doing so.

The project team notes that the distinction between U-Map and U-Multirank indicators may need to be re-evaluated at some stage. As in other rankings, there are some input-oriented indicators in U-Multirank right now.

It will be a major technical challenge to come to a user-driven tool. We will take this into account in our feasibility study. Technical barriers may require us to impose some restrictions on the choices allowed to the users.

WRAPPING UP / SUMMARIZING

- * Clear preference for the Sunburst graphical model.

- * Preference for user-driven comparison; although some voice a need to complement it with predefined criteria

OTHER FINAL REMARKS:

SH 1: general suggestion: in all communications (presentations, reports, websites,...): replace word 'ranking' by 'evaluation' or multi-ranking'... COMMISSION WANTS TO ENCOURAGE CRITICAL USE OF RANKINGS

SH 2: Contextual information on a regional level could be a relevant additional selection criterion for users to filter (after U-MAP filter).

SH 3: Careful with graphic sunburst presentation: may cause confusion with U-Map.

It is envisaged that there will be a final conference at the end of June 2011.

CLOSURE



Stakeholder workshop on the visualization and presentation of the results

Appendix 1: List of Participants

1	Bologna Secretariat (UEFISCSU)	Viorel Proteasa
2	Business Europe	Henning Dettleff
3	CHE	Isabel Roessler
4	CHE	Frank Ziegele
5	CHE	Gero Federkeil
6	CHEPS	Frans van Vught
7	CHEPS	Frans Kaiser
8	CHEPS	Ben Jongbloed
9	CHEPS	Elisabeth Epping
10	CHEPS	Maarja Beerkens
11	COIMBRA	Jeppe Dorup Olesen
12	Conference of Schools for Advanced Engineering Education and Research (CESAER)	Lieve Coninx
13	Conference of Schools for Advanced Engineering Education and Research (CESAER)	Manfred Horvat
14	Conference of Schools for Advanced Engineering Education and Research (CESAER)	Jörgen Sjöberg
15	CWTS	Robert Tijssen
16	CWTS	Martjin Visser
17	EC DG EAC	Robin van IJperen
18	EC/RTD	Peter Whitten

19	European Centre for Strategic Management of Universities (ESMU)	Nadine Burquel
20	European League of Institutes of the Arts - ELIA	Schelte van Ruiten
21	European League of Institutes of the Arts - ELIA	Ulf Dalnäs
22	European University Association	Ellen Mauritzen
23	Flemish Interuniversity Council	Sven Van Lommel
24	INCENTIM	Julie Callaert
25	Irish University Association (IUA)/University College Dublin	Maura McGinn
26	LERU	Joost van Asten
27	Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe (UNICA)	Ana Ramos Falcão
28	Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe (UNICA)	Phillippe Vincke
29	Nordic Council of Ministers	Pernille Milthers
30	NVAO	Guido Langouche
31	OST	Ghislaine Filliatreau
32	Rectors' Conference - Estonia /Tallinn Technical University	Tiia Vihand
33	Rectors' Conference - Finland (FCUR)	Krista Varantola
34	Rectors' Conference - Germany (HRK)	Rolf Peter
35	Rectors Conference - Iceland (NRCI)/University of Iceland	Baldvin Zarióh
36	Rectors' Conference - Italy (CRUI)	Massimo Carfagna
37	Rectors' Conference - Norway (UHR)	Guri Bakken
38	Rectors' Conference - Spain (CRUE)	Anselmo Valle
39	Rectors' Conference for Danish University Colleges (CVU)/VIA University College	Peter Aalykke
40	Rectors' Conference, French Community of Belgium (CREF)	Elisabeth Kokkelkoren
41	Rectors' Conference, French Community of Belgium	Fabienne Michel

	(CREF)/University of Liège	
42	Rectors' Conference, French Community of Belgium (CREF)/University of Liège	Dominique Thewissen
43	Technical University of Catalonia	Marisa Juste Ezquerra
44	The European Association of Conservatoires (AEC)	Kevin Voets
45	The Swedish Association of Higher Education	Sverker Lindblad
46	Utrecht Network	Felipe Salve
47	Universite de Mons	Bernard Harmegnies