If our metrics are not shaped by our core values, our values will be distorted by our metrics

Introduction to SCOPE: how to conduct a responsible evaluation

Laura Himanen, research specialist, Tampere University, Finland

Tanja Strom, senior research adviser, Oslo metropolitan University, Norway

SCOPE: 5 stages for doing evaluation responsibly
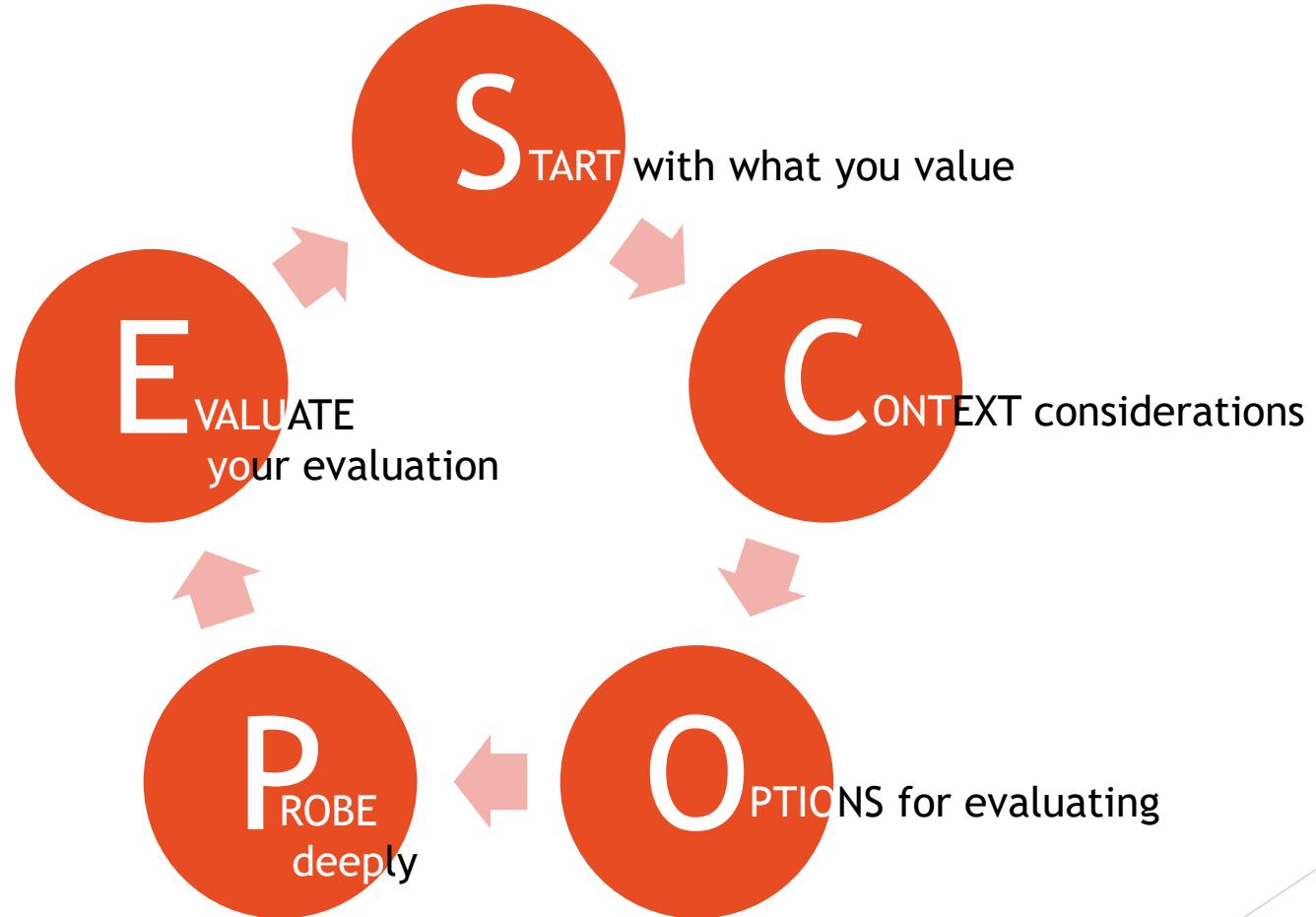
SCOPE: 5 stages for doing evaluation responsibly

START with what you value

- Not what others' value
- Not by the availability of data

CONTEXT considerations

- WHO are you evaluating?
- WHY are you evaluating?
- Do you need to evaluate at all?

OPTIONS for evaluating

- Consider both quantitative and qualitative options
- Be careful when using quantitites to indicate qualities
- Evaluate with the evaluated

PROBE deeply

- WHO might your evaluation discriminate against?
- HOW might your evaluation approach be gamed?
- WHAT might the unintended consequences be?
- Does the cost outweigh the benefit?

EVALUATE your evaluation

- Did your evaluation achieve its aims?
- Was it formative as well as summative?
- Keep your approach under review

- There is also no doubt that there is an increased focus on responsible research evaluation as a result of sector agendas including open science, improving research culture and responsible research and innovation.

- Responsible research evaluation is now a requirement of Plan S and the Research Council of Norway's policy on Open Science. And several funders are now taking an interest in this area so further funder expectations may follow.

- Institutions need to make sure they are **operationally ready** for these requirements.

Approach to design a responsible evaluation
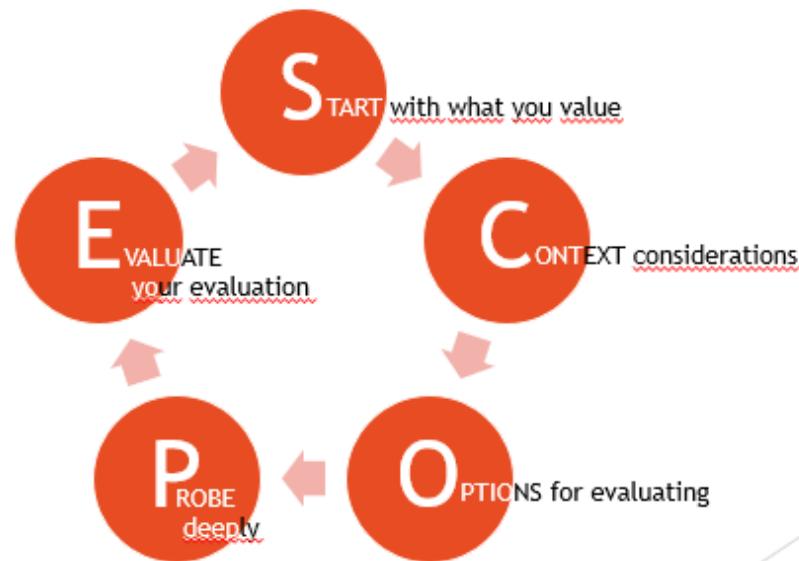
Use SCOPE to develop a new evaluation approach for ......

▶ Are you introducing performance indicators?

  ▶ what sort of performance you are looking for?

▶ Are you looking to improve impact?

  ▶ What kinds of indicators could there be to monitor or evaluate it?

▶ External policy drivers on Open Science, RRI and other

  ▶ monitor and assess the impacts of ...?

  ▶ establish their **own** response to the opportunities **offered**

▶ Implementing a policy?

  ▶ How do you measure the change or the process?
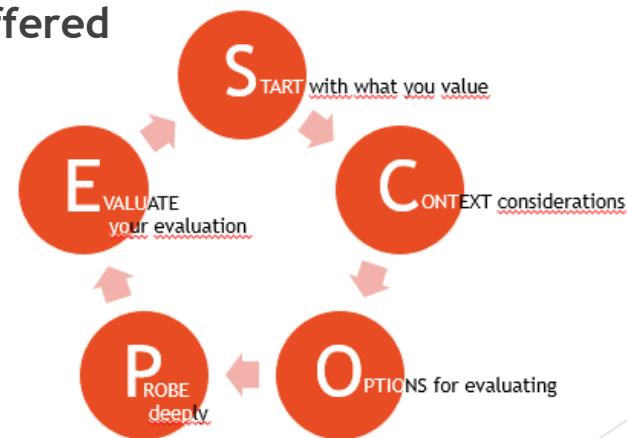
e-Value-ate

▶ S – Start with what you value

'If our metrics are not shaped by our core values, our values will be distorted by our metrics'

Checklist for a workshop to design an evaluation

Organisational level:

- Focus of evaluation: "we want to evaluate [x] for [y]"

- Brief overview of the workshop(s):

- Date(s)

- Focus of each workshop (if more than two)

- Meetings held to prepare (number, content, who involved)

Workshop content:

Approach:

- Exploring what the participants VALUE about the entity under evaluation.

- Articulating the CONTEXTS in which they seek to evaluate that entity

- Exploring the OPTIONS for evaluating this value in these contexts

- PROBING the proposed solutions for the 4 key questions

- Setting up an EVALUATION of the evaluation approach.

Workshop outcome:

- Describe the outcome of the workshop. How will this organisation now be evaluating this dimension?

Examples of SCOPE workshops

- ▶ Workshop 1: What do we value in supporting the careers of others? (a university)

- ▶ Workshop 2: Improving Diversity and Inclusion through our Editorial teams (a publisher)

- ▶ Workshop 3: Considering how open research practices can actually help achieve research quality, visibility and impact (a university)

Workshop 1: What do we value in supporting the careers of others? (a university)

Before the workshop:

- What is the aim?

  - Help identify the best way to evaluate a behaviour important to the university, supporting academic careers

- How can you reach the aim? What are the desired outcomes of the workshop → where do you want to be after the session?

  - 2 workshops: the first one focused on identifying what it is that we value in supporting the careers of others [S – start with what you value]. The results will feed into the second workshop.

  - The second workshop will be about establishing how to evaluate the behaviour that we value [C, O, P and E]

Workshop 1: What do we value in supporting the careers of others? (a university)

- Who should take part?
  - consideration on the number of participants (more than 10 make discussions difficult)
  - who are mostly concerned, who are needed to reach the aims?
    - Workshop 1 focused on actions that individuals can take, rather than organisational actions (e.g., university career services or research and innovation services), as well as on motivation to support others' careers (on individual and organizational level)
    - Participants in workshop 1: researchers from different disciplines on different career stages
- How will you conduct it?
  - Face to face? Zoom/Teams? Working in smaller groups as well? Facilitators needed?
  - Need for pre-assignments? Do participants need supporting information before the workshop, or will the workshop be sufficiently self-explanatory?
    - Zoom workshop, with group sessions in breakout rooms
    - No pre-reading, but participants were asked to discuss and reflect on good examples of career support

Workshop 1: What do we value in supporting the careers of others? (a university)

Results and conclusions

- The first workshop provided insights on what it is that we value in terms of supporting others' careers

  - Valuing also non-academic outputs, as well as career aspirations outside of academia

  - Valuing the importance of all sorts of networks and collaborations, especially in terms of ECRs career progression

  → Support for these activities is needed

- Insights also on what kinds of benefits supporting career development could have:

  - people leaving academia having a better sense of commitment to the university → future industry collaborators?

  - reputation of being a good place to work → improved recruitment

Workshop 1: What do we value in supporting the careers of others? (a university)

Results and conclusions

► Participants talk about the issue from a very personal, individualistic point of view → probably the case in most discussions concerning issues like values

  ► Interpreting and possibly generalizing the results with the participants is important

    ► Values to be taken forward are distilled and communicated to the participants for comments

► Evaluating individual behaviour is not the idea, but probably incentivizing individual behaviour is → to be taken into consideration when moving on to the second workshop

  ► C for context: why are you evaluating

Workshop 2: Improving Diversity and Inclusion through Editorial teams (a publisher)

Before the workshop:

- What is the aim?
    - Improving diversity and inclusion through editorial boards
- How can you reach the aim? What are the desired outcomes of the workshop → where do you want to be after the session?
    - Before the workshop the representatives of the publisher decided the S → diversity and C (-context), the why → incentivizing diversity
- Usually issues that are discussed with the units/people under evaluation

Workshop 2: Improving Diversity and Inclusion through Editorial teams (a publisher)

▶ Who should take part?

  ▶ Editors and editorial board members from different disciplines and different regions

▶ How will you conduct it?

  ▶ The whole group discussed each issue

  ▶ Very limited amount of questions, all decided beforehand

  ▶ The focus was on how diversity benefits journals (publishing is a business)

Workshop 2: Improving Diversity and Inclusion through Editorial teams (a publisher)

Results and conclusions

- The workshop provided important insights on what are the most pressing issues in terms of diversity (from the point of view of a publisher and more generally the publishing industry)

- Editors find increasing diversity and inclusion very important but they felt the industry in general should be more motivated to advocate them

- Some ideas on how to motivate editors and editorial boards (to make them feel the need to increase diversity) came up → it is now up to the publisher to come up with how

  - Is evaluting developments in this issue the answer?

  - Further discussions are needed in terms of how to evaluate (O for options, P for probe) → a second workshop? This time with the evaluator.
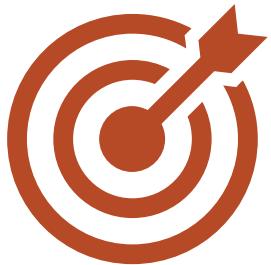
What is the aim?

Achieving research quality, visibility and impact through Open Science practices

How can you reach the aim?

What are the desired outcomes?

- Establishing the university's response to the opportunities offered by Open Science to achieve university's ambitions

(as opposed to external policy drivers) [S]

- An evaluation approach that would measure openness at different levels

Workshop 3: Can Open Science practices help achieve research quality, visibility and impact (a university)

Who should take part?

- Academic staff
  - working group was set up

How will you conduct it?

- Several **contexts** for evaluation were chosen [C]:
  - At university level, analysing their current level
  - At university and group level, monitoring their development
  - At individual level, incentivizing engagement and rewarding it
- Options for evaluating were scrutinized [O]
- Their intended and unintended consequences were probed [P]

Workshop 3: Can Open Science practices help achieve research quality, visibility and impact (a university)

Results and conclusions

- Probing of evaluation options and risks involved in the chosen contexts resulted in deciding that evaluation was not the way to go

  - Not all disciplines have an equal opportunity to engage with open research

  - Rewarding openness might result to gaming

  - There is a danger of generating a compliance culture

  - … the list continues

- The best way to incentivize is to support people, not to measure people

- Associating openness with recognition (celebrating it) makes more of a difference than evaluating it

https://inorms.net/activities/research-evaluation-working-group/

laura.himanen@tuni.fi; tanja.strom@oslomet.no