
Utilisation in research applications – some helpful tips!

Putting together really good research applications is a challenge – time is often limited and there are usually many issues to be addressed and many different parties involved. In order to succeed in obtaining funding, it is usually also necessary to describe how the results will be utilised and how they will create real change in society. Here are some helpful tips regarding how you can describe and work with utilisation!

1

WHAT can be utilised?

Research projects give rise to different types of new knowledge that can be seen as "intellectual assets": **data, methods, models, designs, software** and **inventions**. These assets can be packaged and transferred to other people and organisations where they can create benefits and value. The assets are often developed as a side effect during the search for answers to the research questions, for example when data needs to be collected and new measuring methods and analysis programs are developed. When it comes to the issue of Utilisation in research applications, an appropriate activity to propose is the creation of work methods during the course of the project that are aimed at identifying all types of assets and the continual assessment of the different types of target groups within academia, the public and non-profit sectors and private enterprise that could derive benefits from them.

2

HOW can knowledge be utilised?

The utilisation of research can take place in different ways, and the key is to find a good way of financing the path from the creation of new knowledge to the application of that knowledge in society, otherwise referred to as the "innovation process". Commercialisation is only one of a number of possible alternatives and represents in itself a form for the financing of the innovation process. The form of utilisation you choose will depend partly on what is going to be utilised, and partly on the form of utilisation with which you yourself want to work. An ideal in this context is the realisation of the knowledge triangle with interaction between education, research and utilisation. Examples of different forms of utilisation include **education, open innovation and clusters, research collaboration, licensing** and **starting a company**. Carrying out activities aimed at one or several of these forms of utilisation often requires specialist competences such as communicators, pedagogues, IT specialists, business developers, lawyers and innovation advisors. It is therefore important to make appropriate allowances for such competences in the application in terms of resources, activities and timetables.

Education

New advances affect the content of research-related programmes and courses for students and professionals. Utilisation can have to do with the development of educational materials or courses, the arranging of a conference or the publication of popular scientific articles. Financing may be needed to cover the cost of hiring expertise during development (pedagogues, communicators, conference arrangers) and the production of materials including eLearning.

Open innovation and clusters

Knowledge can be made available to many people and can be distributed in the form of Creative Commons, Open Source and/or Toolkits. For example, large amounts of data or software programs can be disseminated in this way, provided that the applicable agreements and/or legislation allow it. By creating an interested and knowledgeable group that follows the project, resources can also be provided to the project. Financing may be required to hire experts such as lawyers, Open Innovation experts, system developers and experts in human-computer interaction and social media.

Research collaboration

A direct form of utilisation takes place when academic researchers work together with personnel from companies, the public sector and/or non-profit organisations. Collaboration can occur at different stages of research projects: the formulation of research questions, the development of methods and tools, the collection of data and analysis and publication. The process can be enhanced through activities like workshops and training courses or through a temporary "change" of workplace.

Funds for utilisation can, for example, be used to finance such workshops, the aim of which is the transfer of knowledge.

Licensing or starting a company

Within a number of areas it is not unusual for research to give rise to inventions. An invention can be protected by a patent, which in turn can be licensed to companies, either at a price or free of charge. Patenting and protecting an invention is a costly process, which is why it is important to first identify both the potential market and the protection position. A single patent or a collection of intellectual assets can form the basis for starting a company.

Certain financiers are willing to provide financing for patents and commercialisation, while others are not – always read the fine print! In projects involving a number of different parties there is also a need for processes and agreements regarding the management of inventions and questions of ownership, in relation to which different financiers may have varying requirements and guidelines.



WHEN can utilisation take place?

Utilisation should be **integrated** into the research activities rather than only being something that is addressed at the time of application or at the end of a project. One important recommendation is therefore to describe in your application how you intend to work with utilisation on an ongoing basis throughout the course of the project, which parties within and outside the project you intend to use, and who is responsible for what.



WHO can carry out utilisation?

It is often parties other than researchers who represent resources in the utilisation process. Consequently the project plan and budget must clearly set out how funds are to be used and which (types of) internal and external suppliers are to be engaged, if any. At and in the vicinity of Chalmers there are a number of different parties who support the utilisation of research.



Tools for utilisation

Innovationskontor Väst has developed a number of tools aimed at supporting utilisation. In order to identify and determine what is to happen with the, as is often the case, unplanned intellectual assets that arise in a project, it is a good idea to describe in your application how inventories of these intellectual assets will be carried out on an ongoing basis and, if applicable, how they will be verified. The **Intellectual Assets Inventory** and **Intellectual Asset Verification** tools have been developed for this purpose. In order to identify appropriate questions, work methods and partners for the project, contextual analysis tools can be used, and in this area we not only have the more general **Freedom2Research** tool but also **Research Resilience Review** which focuses on sustainability. The **Innovation Strategy Design** tool helps to create a long-term approach to utilisation in terms of orientation, partners etc.



The above tips are based on Chalmers' strategy for utilisation and have been formulated by Innovationskontor Väst, which is the unit at Chalmers whose task it is to support researchers in relation to utilisation. There are significant differences between the various potential research financiers when it comes to how and in relation to what you may use funding, which is why all of these tips will not necessarily be relevant in all contexts! Remember that there are many different terms that are used by various parties: utilisation, innovation, application, technology transfer, dissemination, outreach, exploitation, diffusion and so on.

Would you like to know more? Or would you like us to be one of the parties in your application? Please visit innovationskontor.chalmers.se and contact us!