Analyze & understand societal impact research with SciVal

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What is your university’s role in Societal Impact?

Increasingly, university leadership, governments, funders, the community, and more are demanding to understand university research’s value. They want to know that the significant investment into research is going to help society.

A university can contribute to societal impact in multiple ways. For example:

- Interventions to target hunger among students and staff – for example, provide access to food banks
- Building standards to minimize water use
- Track application and admission rates of under-represented groups

According to a QS blog post, universities are responsible for advocating for the importance of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They are many ways they can do this, including with their research.

“Provide research knowledge, innovations and solutions towards achieving the SDGs. As universities tend to receive private and public research funds to directly and/or indirectly solve world issues, universities are responsible for providing the in-depth academic and vocational training needed to achieve the SDGs.”

Understanding your research through a United Nations Sustainability Goals (UN SDGs) lens

In 2015 the United Nations (UN) announced the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and was subsequently adopted by all UN member states.

The UN defined 17 individual SDGs:

Seeing your institution’s research for each of these SDGs helps you understand this vital way you contribute to societal impact.

To understand more about a university’s role in societal impact and the United Nations Sustainable development goals, visit our research leaders’ guide.
Analyzing Societal Impact related research in SciVal

Times Higher Education (THE), Vertigo Ventures, Elsevier and others collaborated on developing search queries to represent the research in the first 16 SDGs. These are periodically reviewed and refined. Full details of the methodology for each SDG search query are available on Mendeley.

SDG Research areas

Using the same search strings, SciVal identifies the right research belonging to the correct sustainable development goal. These are all captured in pre-defined Research Areas.

With SciVal, you can go deeper into analysis to learn more about your SDG research. These include:

• Benchmarking your SDG research against others
• Understanding the top researchers in each SDG
• Discovering the research topics that are most prominent for SDG researchers

Caption: You can review the research in any Sustainable Development Goal by using pre-defined Research Areas.

NOTE: All examples use a period of 2015 – 2020.

Benchmark

Wageningen University & Research is located in the Netherlands. This university has produced the most research related to SDG 2: Zero Hunger.

Caption: The top worldwide academic institutions in SDG 2: Zero Hunger (per SciVal)

Imagine that the university wants to know how they compare with other European universities on research about zero hunger. They can use SciVal benchmarking capabilities to compare themselves to the top five European universities.

Caption: Benchmark the top 5 European institutions by scholarly output for SDG 2: Zero Hunger (per SciVal)

It is interesting to see that they have led the research on zero hunger in their region for several years, but that all of the universities are continuing to publish more, and some at a higher velocity.

Caption: Benchmark the top 5 European institutions by Field-Weighted Citation Impact for SDG 2: Zero Hunger (per SciVal)

It is also reassuring to see that their Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI) is generally high – consistently above 2.0.
Top Authors

Turning to another area, looking at SDG 15: Life on Land, in South America, you can see that the University of Sao Paulo (USP) is the top producer.

From this point, you can also see who at USP has produced the most about life on land in South America.

Dr. Pedro Henrique Santin Brancalion is the top USP and South American author about life on land. With this information, you can use SciVal and Scopus to find out more about Dr. Brancalion.

Topics

Another way to look at research is to understand the Topic it covers. A Topic is a collection of documents with a common focused intellectual interest. Publications are clustered into Topics based upon a direct citation analysis. Learn more about Topic Prominence in Science

There are approximately 96,000 topics in SciVal.

In SciVal, you can see that he publishes the most on the Forest Restoration; Tropical Dry Forests; Natural Regeneration Topic. This Topic is promising since it's in the 97th prominence profile. In general, this indicates that the Topic has a lot of momentum and is unlikely to die out soon.
You can also see other institutions publishing on this Topic.

By combining the data in SciVal, with the knowledge of the institutions and researchers, you can develop your research strategy into global areas that are important for society.

There are many ways to analyze research with SciVal. If you want to see more, or information specific to you institution: