Executive Summary

Kiel University sought to enhance its research strength by bolstering its four principal areas of excellence in research through increasing collaboration with like-minded universities around the world and ensuring recruitment and retention of key researchers.

To achieve its goals, Kiel University needed a system to objectively evaluate the visibility and stature of its researchers and their papers. The university chose SciVal® Spotlight to create a definitive assessment of its research capacity.
The analytical capabilities of SciVal Spotlight and SciVal Strata have been integrated and upgraded to create the new SciVal, a ready-to-use tool to analyze the world of research, and establish, execute and evaluate the best strategies for research organizations.
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In a six-month period, the university created 20 reports using SciVal Spotlight, along with peer review, funding information and recommendations from Faculty Heads, to support strategic decisions made by the University President on recruitment and retention within Kiel University.

Professor Thomas Bosch, Vice President for Research and International Affairs, said that SciVal Spotlight helped the university draw up a comprehensive picture of the research performed within the university’s focus areas. This in turn, provided valuable support to guide the strategic decisions made at the highest levels within university administration and research management.

Background: Focused research in North Germany

Founded in 1665 in the northern German state of Schleswig-Holstein, in the wake of the devastating Thirty Years’ War, University of Kiel’s first class consisted of 140 students educated to serve the state in four areas of study: Theology, Law, Medicine and Philosophy. Over the centuries the university, known in German as Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, or CAU, has become the principal academic research institution of North Germany, and home to some of Europe’s greatest scientists. Nobel laureate Max Planck taught physics here in the late 19th century. Today, the university has more than 180 study paths, 24,000 students, 3,170 staff and 370 professors.

With a mission to create “a university of interconnecting and interactive academic cultures,” Kiel University again focuses on four areas of research, though these now reflect the complexity and dynamism of modern science:

• Marine and Geosciences
• Life Sciences
• Nano and Surface Science
• Societal, Environmental and Cultural Change

Kiel University’s success in these four areas emanates from its pursuit of global collaboration with researchers from like-minded universities. Special links have been forged with the neighboring countries of Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea region, in addition to strong ties with countries all over the world. Approximately 40 partnership agreements have been established in Europe, the Americas and Asia.
Challenge:
Strategic retention and funding decisions

Over the past five years, Kiel University pursued a strategic objective to enhance the visibility of its four key areas of interdisciplinary science. The objective was not only to attract key researchers but also to allocate funding to sustain growth in these areas.

The challenge was finding the most effective way to:
- Identify the top research teams to target for increased investment
- Support decision-making regarding requests by researchers for increased funding
- Retain key researchers who are considering moves to other institutions

The University’s Research and Planning Unit is responsible for providing the University Board with reports on researchers’ requests for additional funding and on retaining key researchers; the Research and Planning Unit receives 40 such requests per year.

Solution

Over a six-month period, the Research and Planning Unit produced 20 reports, which supported the University President when making decisions concerning new professorships, new research platforms and facilities and negotiations with professorial staff. These actions served to improve the quality and elevate the stature of the four focus areas at Kiel University.

Each report contained four parts:
- Summary profiles of researchers derived from all available data, including SciVal Spotlight information
- Rich details about each researcher from SciVal Spotlight, including the number and nature of competencies in the four key focus areas
- Funds obtained by and awarded to each researcher in recent years
- The Research and Planning Unit’s recommendations regarding each researcher
Using SciVal Spotlight to gauge a researcher’s visibility

Step 1:
Access SciVal Spotlight at spotlight.scival.com

Step 2:
Use the search option on the top right of the screen to search for the researcher.

Step 3:
Explore the competency details pages to identify via the keywords if the competency is within one of Kiel University’s 4 key areas of focus. If it is, then the researcher is gauged to be visible and details about the competency are recorded.

Note: If the researcher does not contribute to any competencies, their h-index, publication numbers and citations from Scopus.com are recorded instead.
Using SciVal Spotlight to identify researchers for funding opportunities in the 4 areas of focus

**Step 1:**
Go to the details page for a competency that is identified to be within one of the 4 key areas

**Step 2:**
On the Authors tab, filter on Kiel University authors

**Step 3:**
Click on the author name of interest to read more about the institutions they have published at, the competencies they have contributed to, their h-index and articles in Scopus
Conclusion:

Information provided through SciVal Spotlight became a critical component for Kiel University to reach its strategic research objectives. It must also be noted that significant institutional understanding of the research faculty was also critical. This knowledge, combined with the information from SciVal Spotlight and a thorough understanding of its methodology, is key to avoiding misinterpretation of the data.

“SciVal Spotlight was an integral component in the success of Kiel University’s strategic objective to enhance the stature and quality of its four focus areas. The establishment of new professorships and the retention of key players are the most important decisions a university president must make. We found SciVal Spotlight to be a truly powerful tool for our decision-making process. Kiel University is going to continue using SciVal Spotlight to help allocate our resources in the best possible way.”

- Thomas Bosch, Vice President, Kiel University