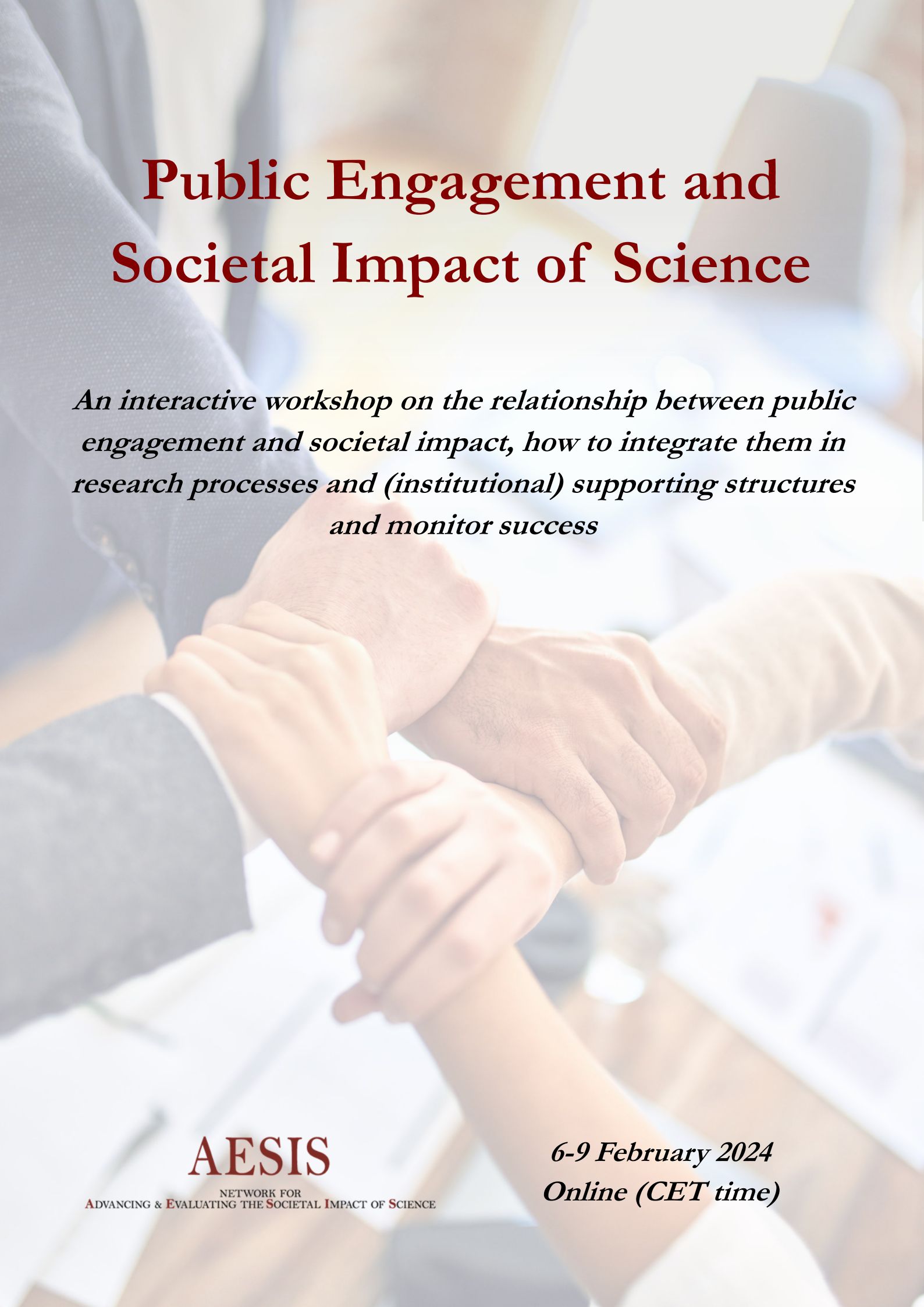

Public Engagement and Societal Impact of Science

An interactive workshop on the relationship between public engagement and societal impact, how to integrate them in research processes and (institutional) supporting structures and monitor success

AESIS
NETWORK FOR
ADVANCING & EVALUATING THE SOCIETAL IMPACT OF SCIENCE

6-9 February 2024
Online (CET time)

BACKGROUND

The relationship between science and society is under review; whereas the interaction was often considered to be a one way street where researchers disseminate knowledge and implement change. It is now more encouraged to have a continuous two way conversation between researchers and societal stakeholders. The underlying principle is that continuous engagement can help increase accountability, transparency and trust while also helping researchers improve responses to social needs on a local, national, or global level.

Recent efforts by funding organisations, higher education institutions, and research academies to integrate public engagement throughout the research process aim to make research more relevant, impactful and trusted. The idea is that societal stakeholders should be involved in the design, conduct, and dissemination of research. In several countries such as the United Kingdom, Netherlands, Germany and Luxembourg, national funders are promoting collaboration with non-academic partners and communities to encourage researchers to develop ideas with their strategic partners early on and ensure that research and innovation is responsive to the knowledge priorities and value of society. Their mission is also to improve research quality, generate fresh insights into the research challenges, and improve trust between research institutions and society. Public engagement as a route to societal impact raises challenges for funders, research enablers, and senior managers at higher education institutes or research academies. Examples of such questions are:

- How to best incentivise and support researchers?;
- What is the best way to measure impact and public engagement?;
- How to ensure public engagement is integrated throughout the whole research process?

In trying to bring public engagement and societal impact closer, AESIS is organising the **Public Engagement and Societal Impact** course. Through this course, we aim to bring together public engagement officers, impact evaluators, institutional leaders and the wider research community to discuss how to help researchers embed public engagement into research strategies and learn tools and strategies to monitor, evaluate and evidence and impact. Participants will be introduced to a range of methods to engage with the public, many evaluative techniques and strategies and tools that generate societal impact. By the end of the four half-day course, participants will be able to apply the learnings of the workshop to real life situation through exercises and presentations.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Public Engagement Officers

Higher Education Leaders & Funders

Impact evaluators at research institutions

University & Research Support Staff

Workshop Topics

Public Engagement as a tool for successful Societal Impact

- What is impact, what are public engagement activities and how are they related?
- How to build public engagement into research, to increase its inclusivity and impact
- Practical examples of impact through public engagement

Planning impactful public engagement

- Clarifying your purpose
- Identifying your audience/target groups
- Deciding on your methods
- Embedding evaluation

Measuring Societal Impact through Public Engagement

- How to go beyond traditional metrics?
- How to monitor and create evidence to show you are generating impact through PE activities

Supporting Researchers to Develop their Public Engagement Skills

- What is needed to support researchers?
- The role of research enablers
- Capacity building and training
- Securing funding for public engagement

Building Supportive Cultures for Public Engagement

- Creating a research culture where public engagement is a central theme
- Creative methodologies that create an embedded approach to public engagement
- Evaluating the effectiveness of your support structures and culture
- How to prepare for the future?

Participants' Presentations

Speakers

Paul Manners

Paul Manners is Associate Professor in Public Engagement at the University of the West of England, and a founding Director of the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE). The NCCPE was established in 2008 to support universities to embed innovative approaches to involving the public in their work.

Paul oversees the NCCPE's coordination of a range of culture change and capacity building projects. He has a particular interest in approaches to supporting organisational change, partnership working, impact assessment and innovation in engagement. He is a member of a number of advisory groups, including the Sciencewise Steering Group. He is regularly called on to provide expert advice or facilitation by policy makers and funders, and to lead high level strategic conversations within universities, working with senior management teams to help them assess their options and to develop appropriate plans for change.

Eric A. Jensen

Dr. Eric A. Jensen is a Senior Research Fellow at the registered scientific and educational charity, The Institute for Methods Innovation (methodsinnovation.org), and works part-time as Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Warwick. Specialising in evidence-based science communication (sciencecomm.science), Jensen has 20 years' experience in science communication research, evaluation and practice. He has worked as a consultant and trainer for many research institutions, including the University of Cambridge, University of Oxford, National Gallery, Natural History Museum, London Zoo, Science Museum Group, European Space Agency, CERN, Science Foundation Ireland, Australian Research Data Commons, National Research Foundation (SAASTA) and UNESCO. Jensen's track record of 100+ papers includes journals such as Nature, PNAS, PLOSONE and Public Understanding of Science. His recent research has focused on socially responsible science, science festival and public engagement event evaluation, diversity of science communication audiences and the long-term impact of public engagement and informal learning activities. Jensen's most recently published books are Science Communication: An Introduction (World Scientific) and Doing Real Research: A Practical Guide to Social Research (SAGE). His training courses are featured at methodsforchange.org. His PhD in sociology is from the University of Cambridge.

ABOUT AESIS

The Network for Advancing and Evaluating the Societal Impact of Science (AESIS) is an international, open community for professionals working on stimulating and demonstrating the impact of science on economy, culture and well-being. Members come from all over the world, where they are involved in the evaluation of impact, research strategy and policy making, science funding, scientometrics, research administration, business creation, public engagement, and many more. We pursue a multi-stakeholder, system-wide approach on an international level, because we believe that stimulating dialogue between different sectors and regions, beyond the project level, will catalyse further development of effective instruments for evaluating and advancing the societal impact of science (including SSHA).

ADVISORY & ASSOCIATION

AESIS Advisory Board

Koenraad Debackere	Executive Director of KU Leuven Research and Development & Chairman of Board of Directors, KBC Group NV, Belgium
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David Sweeney	Former Executive Chair, Research England, United Kingdom
Paul Wouters	Dean of Social and Behavioural Sciences & former Director, CWTS, Leiden University, The Netherlands

REGISTRATIONS ARE NOW OPEN

If this workshop is of interest to you, please head over to our website for information regarding registrations. We are now offering **Early Bird** discounts—please register before the **December 15, 2023** to avail this discount.