

Societal Impact of Scientific Research

The international conference on policies, strategies, tools,
infrastructures and other approaches to successfully achieve and
support societal impact of scientific research

AESIS

NETWORK FOR
ADVANCING & EVALUATING THE SOCIETAL IMPACT OF SCIENCE



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

4-6 June 2025

Heidelberg, Germany

Background

The need for science to tackle challenges our world faces is not a new phenomenon, but has increasingly grown on a global scale, with the world facing pandemics, environmental changes and societal struggles. Policymakers, businesses and other societal actors are increasingly aware of the value of scientific data and knowledge to support them in overcoming challenges, but in many cases the interaction between worlds is not structured or stable enough. For the 13th year, AESIS will be organising their annual conference on Societal Impact of Scientific Research, to bring together stakeholders in- and outside of the science eco-system to engage with each other on the most effective approaches for implementing policies, strategies, methods and tools to optimise societal impact of science and evaluate success.

In 2025, the AESIS Network's annual summer conference will take place in Heidelberg, Germany. The conference expects around 250 participants from more than 30 countries, bringing together experts such as R&D evaluators, university managers, research councils, policy makers, funders, early career researchers and other stakeholders of impact. Among other topics, the focus of this conference will be on **Institutional frameworks and structures to support impact, regional collaboration to improve innovation, and impact monitoring and assessment**. We aim to incorporate topics relevant to the German scientific eco-system as well as a broader global audience. We are very excited to bring our conference back to Germany after several years—to work with new and old colleagues, and truly make an impact by connecting science and society.

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.

AESIS ADVISORY BOARD

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PROGRAMME FORMAT

The three-day programme (detailed in the following pages) includes several types of sessions as well as three “tracks” running through the days to help you choose the relevant elements for your work and get the most out of the conference. To help you decide, we describe the types of formats and tracks below:

Roundtable sessions	At the beginning of the session, the roundtable coordinators will introduce the topic and the discussion points, after which the whole group participates in the hour long conversation, sharing insights and experiences.	Pre-registration required, maximum 20 attendees
Workshops	The workshops offer a more practical experience to specific skills in order to improve and/demonstrate impact. The trainers offer a taste of possible hands-on learnings and potential follow up after the conference.	Pre-registration required, maximum 25 attendees
Other parallel sessions	Most other parallel sessions will include several presentations from different perspectives, followed by a panel discussion and Q&A. Although this is the original format that has been suggested to speakers, some might surprise you...	No limited number of attendees. Also accessible to online participants
Plenary sessions	The plenary sessions are all different from each other in topics and/or formats, but all of them allow for input and questions from the audience. Don't forget to have your phone with the conference app on standby. You will need it!	No limited number of attendees. Also accessible to online participants



Institutional Structures & Culture

Strong and positive societal impact of science does not solely depend on the research projects and the people involved. It requires supporting institutional structures, policies to provide funding and time, training to increase skills, and an overall culture that incentivises working with society in mind. This track will cover these important aspects for a stronger institutional structure, as well as leadership and interdisciplinarity.



Regional Collaboration for Innovation & Impact

Sessions marked with this track will focus on impact created through local engagement with industry, policy, research and the public, as well as the progression of initiatives that begin at the regional level but have far-reaching consequences on a global scale. Efforts initially targeted at improving and developing specific regions may ultimately have the potential to increase innovation and create positive societal impact globally.



Demonstrating & Assessing Impact

In all our efforts to improve the positive impact of science on society it is of utmost importance to consider how impact can be monitored, demonstrated, evaluated and communicated. However, this can be a challenge. Not only is much of the societal impact difficult to measure, being long-term, indirect, subjective and/or untangible, but often skills and time lack as well. This track will address these challenges.

Not all sessions belong to one of these three tracks as there are **many other topics** being covered during the conference. You can also choose to follow the whole track, part of them, or none of them — it is up to you!

Wednesday, 4 June



WALK IN & REGISTRATION

9:00-9:30

OPENING PLENARY

9:30-10:55

CHALLENGES FACED BY SCIENCE & SOCIETY

COFFEE, TEA & GROUP PHOTO BREAK

PARALLEL SESSIONS

11:40-12:55

▼ Institutional Impact Policies
and Leadership

Explore how institutional policies and leadership strategies drive societal impact, emphasising the role of organisational vision and governance in shaping impactful research outcomes.

▼ Methods and Tools for
Monitoring Impact

Delve into innovative methodologies and tools for tracking and evaluating the societal impacts of scientific research.

▼ Co-Creation &
Citizen Engagement

Building on involvement and engagement for societal impact while respecting communities and building trust.

Workshop: Impact Clinic

Offering open exchange on challenges faced by impact agents in the hopes of providing community support & peer advice based on our joint experience & expertise.

LUNCH BREAK + GOOD PRACTICES OF SOCIETAL IMPACT STORIES

INTERACTIVE PANEL

13:55-15:25

Within the theme '**Institutional Structures & Cultures**', the audience decides which challenges, questions or debates the panel will address.

SOCIAL PROGRAMME & CONFERENCE DINNER



Thursday, 5 June



WALK IN & REGISTRATION

9:00-9:30

OPENING PLENARY

9:30-11:00

REGIONAL COLLABORATION FOR INSTITUTIONS & IMPACT

COFFEE & TEA BREAK

PARALLEL SESSIONS

11:30-12:45

- ▼ **Institutional Frameworks & Strategies** Discuss the structures and strategic approaches institutions adopt to foster research that addresses societal needs and generates sustainable impact.
- ▼ **Evaluation Frameworks** Examine robust frameworks for assessing the societal value of research, considering metrics, qualitative approaches, and stakeholder perspectives.
- Digital Transformation & AI** Investigate the transformative potential of digital technologies and AI in amplifying research impact and addressing complex societal challenges.
- ▼ **Workshop: Collaboration between Science & Industry** Cluster hubs and knowledge transfer

LUNCH BREAK + GOOD PRACTICES OF SOCIETAL IMPACT STORIES

ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS

13:30-14:30

- ▼ **Interdisciplinarity** Collaborating not only with different disciplines but also departments within universities.
- ▼ **Indicators to Demonstrate Impact** Monitoring & demonstrating impact, responsible metrics, methods & tools. Discuss softwares and platforms to monitor impact.
- ▼ **Connecting local stakeholders for stronger inclusive impact** Bridging gaps between local stakeholders to create inclusive research-driven solutions that address diverse societal needs.
- Open Science** How would having more access to scientific data and research affect scientific stakeholders' credibility and trust in science?

TBD

14:45-15:45

In previous years we have traditionally organised the AESIS Family Feud and Impact debate, but this year we will introduce something new...

SOCIAL PROGRAMME

AESIS 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY GALA

Friday, 6 June



WALK IN & REGISTRATION

9:00-9:30

OPENING PLENARY

9:30-10:50

DEMONSTRATING & ASSESSING IMPACT

COFFEE & TEA BREAK

PARALLEL SESSIONS

11:30-12:45

Local Solutions for
Global Challenges

Addressing global challenges through scalable and transferable regional practices.

Evidence Informed
Policy Making

Focus on the integration of scientific evidence into policymaking processes to ensure that decisions are informed and effective.

Workshop: Science
Communication Improv

Making use of established techniques from the world of theatre and improvisation, this session will enable participants to make genuine connection with their audience. So communication becomes more than just the transmission of information.

Workshop: Grant
Proposal Writing

Tips, tricks, good-practices and pitfalls of Grant Proposal Writing.

LUNCH BREAK + GOOD PRACTICES OF SOCIETAL IMPACT STORIES

CLOSING PLENARY

13:55-15:25

WHAT'S NEXT?

CLOSING RECEPTION

