EMEG (Euro-Mediterranean Expert Group)

TASK 1 – RESEARCH RESULTS

Concept Note

1) Introduction

This present concept note summarizes some theoretical aspects that should guide EMEG unravel a sound conceptual model and guidelines for research results valorization. The basic idea is that a conceptual model for research results uptake should address the process of development, diffusion and implementation leading to the transfer of research results into practice and viable use. The model should also address ways and means of participation and involvement of key actors and civil society in research dissemination and results valorization.

2) The conceptual model: a scheme for dissemination and implementation of research results

The model is graphically presented by a flowchart (Figure 1), showing different steps and stages of the "research valorization chain" from research implementation to results uptake into practice, through a focus on the knowledge share and experience exchange (KTE).

As shown in Figure 1, the first dimension to address in the "research valorization chain" (point 1) is normally linked to the identification of **thematic topics (or "niches")** in water, food and energy in which there is urgent need to valorize research results or achieve results enhancing business opportunities and innovation, including social innovation. This will help establish specific objectives (aims) and strategy for dissemination highlighted by point 2 in Figure 1.

In this stage it's important to set research plans and dissemination strategies aiming at enhancing innovation through the development of successful:

- Private/public partnerships investing on research results (Economic domain);
- Research-Technology partnerships translating research results into real practice (Technology domain);
- Social partnership, supporting research results uptake thorough the direct engagement of the civil society (Socio-cultural domain).

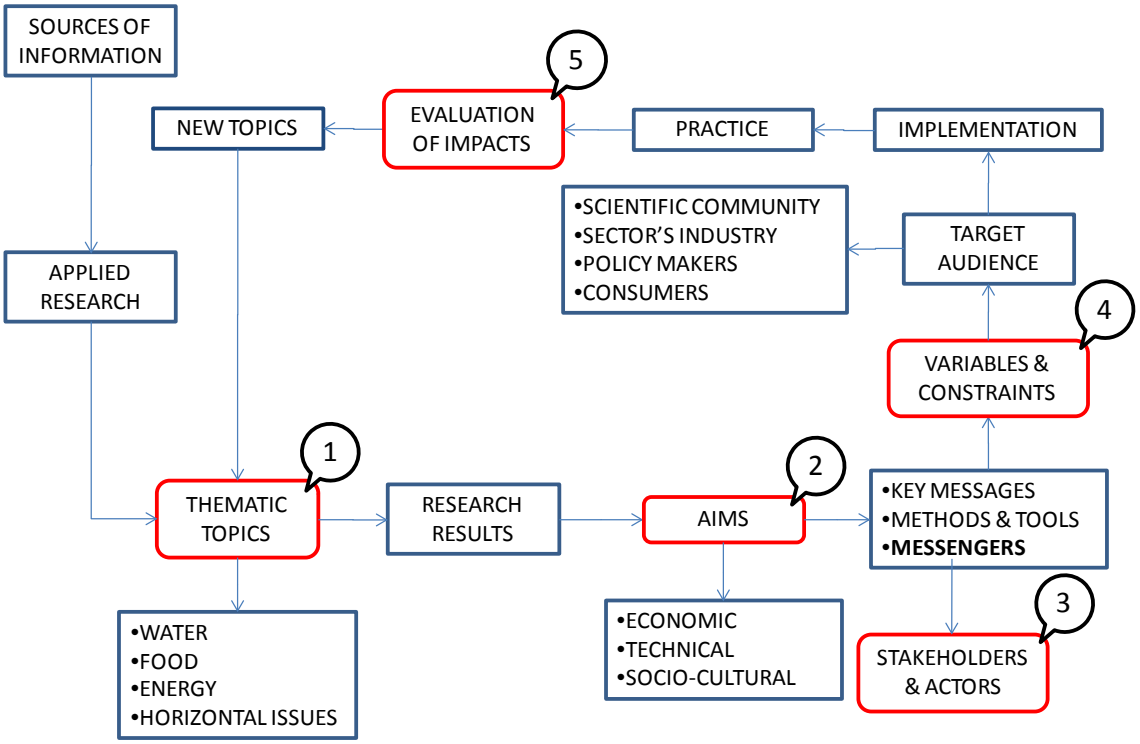

Figure 1 – Dissemination of research findings: the flowchart

To successfully cope with above challenges dissemination should be tailored to different categories of users (**Target audiences**). People must be reached by an efficient dissemination strategy based on understandable messages, shared knowledge and clear benefits for the society. For all research projects it is crucial to identify and analyze the needs and concerns of different stakeholders particularly when the project aims at supporting decision making in the political process. In order to bridge the gap between research and policy, a stakeholder analysis is normally used to identify different stakes and bridge among research, policy and enterprising.

Different categories of target audience are normally:

- Researchers
- Private Industry and SMEs
- Policy makers
- Consumers / users

A success key for and effective communication is certainly the adaptation of research outcomes to the need and comprehensibility of the stakeholders. Therefore mapping of **target audiences** is a relevant aspect (scientific, technical, business, institutional and governmental audiences) in order to better adapt research outcomes dissemination to needs.
Once target audiences are identified and key messages and dissemination material developed, messengers (or intermediaries) which are perceived as credible by different target audiences will be responsible for dissemination.

According to the conceptual model, the identification and engagement of stakeholders and actors having a role in valorization of research results is the next step highlighted by point 3 of Figure 1.
Several factors or variables influence the results valorization process. This issue is highlighted by the conceptual model in point 4 (Figure 1). Underlining that some variables/factors will have a positive impact while others might be a constraint for the research valorization process.

The way research results are valorized and uptaken in the real practices will give indication of the impact that research may have on society. **Research impact** is another important dimension in the conceptual model as highlighted in point 5 of Figure 1. Approaches to measuring the impact of research are widely discussed in literature. Something is sure: impact objectives and indicators should be well defined when designing and evaluating research for public and private funding.

3) Main tasks, activities and expected results in developing guidelines for research results dissemination and valorization

Figure 2 presents the flow chart of tasks / issues which could be considered when developing a conceptual model and guidelines for research results valorization. These tasks, together with the "conceptual model" and "guidelines" are included in the objectives of EMEG as described in paragraph 3.2 of the EMEG Rationale for research results valorization at paragraph 3.2.

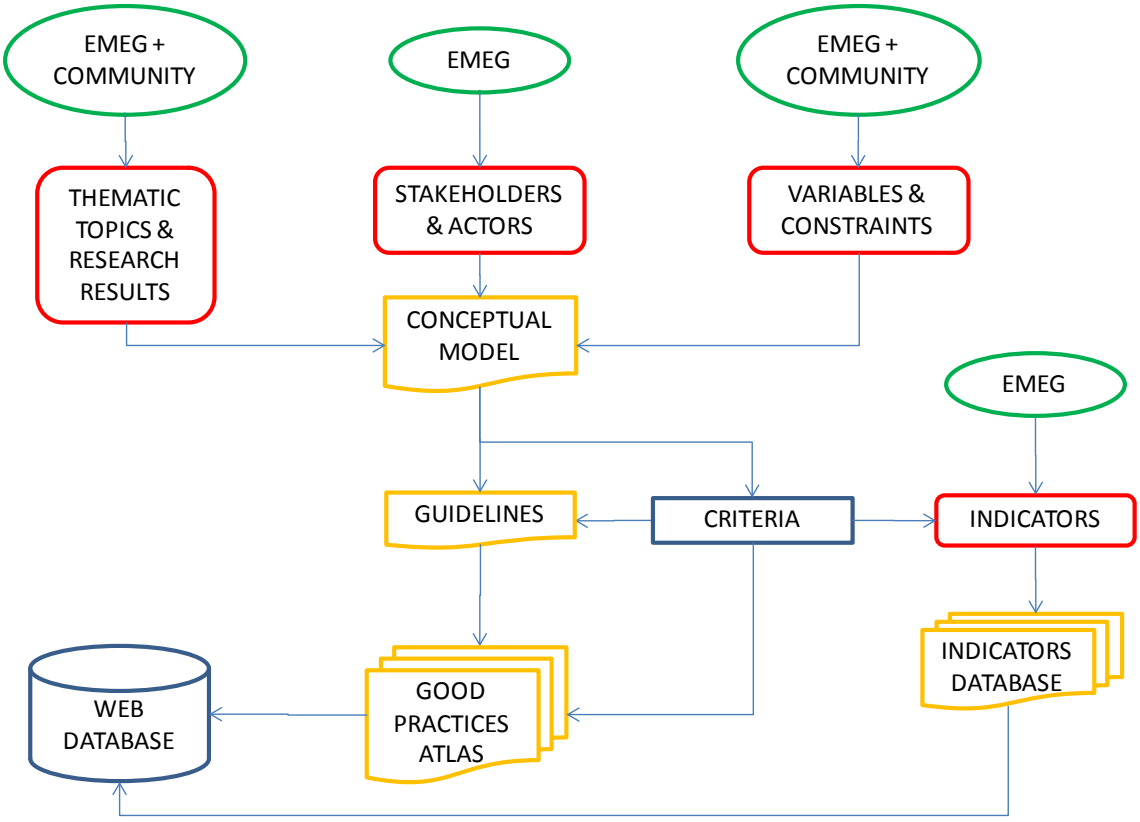

Figure 2 – Flow chart of tasks (red) and outcomes (yellow) in the research valorization chain.

4) EMEG activities *(a detailed description of EMEG activities is presented in Methodological Guidelines)*

4.1 Identifying thematic "niches" (or topics) for which conditions for uptake of research results are favorable and needed.

Objective of the work:
To identify thematic topics for which conditions for uptake of research results are favorable and urgently needed and their prioritization.
To identify research results to be valorized for each prioritized thematic topic/societal challenge (water, food, energy).

Responsible(s):

- WEB Communities (MEDSPRING AGORA')
- EMEG experts

Expected result(s):
Prioritized thematic topics for each societal challenge (water, food, energy) or horizontal issues.
Research results for each thematic topic for each societal challenge (water, food, energy) or horizontal issues.

4.2. Stocktaking of stakeholders and actors having a role in results valorization and dissemination in the Mediterranean and their potential (stake, capacity, knowledge).

Objective of the work:
To identify main stakeholders/actors involved in valorisation and spreading of researches outcomes for each societal challenge. These actors will represent the basis to be also engaged in other MEDSPRING activities (e.g. brokerage workshops).

Responsible(s):

- EMEG experts

Expected result(s):
A list of stakeholders/actors for each identified thematic topic and for each societal challenge (water, food, energy).

4.3. Developing a scheme of variables and factors necessary to enhance successful results valorization (results valorization chain)

Objective of the work:
To identify main barriers/constraints and enhancing factors to effective dissemination and results valorization for each societal challenge, prioritize them and find actions (at different level: micro, meso and macro) to overcome main barriers/constraints or to implement enhancing factors for dissemination and valorization. To organize such variables in relation to the thematic topics selected for each societal challenge.

Responsible(s):

- Communities (AGORA')
- EMEG experts

Expected result(s):
Prioritized lists of most common constraints and enhancing factors for selected thematic topics, systematized (accordingly categories and levels) and the related actions to overcome these barriers and to improve results valorization.

An additional activity (not included in the EMEG Rationale provided to experts) will be carried out by EMEG in the Lisbon Meeting.

In particular, experts will discuss and agree on the identification of main **research impacts** on different target groups in relation to social, economic, environmental and institutional sustainability.

This activity will be the base for providing a frame of impact objectives allowing – in a more advanced phase of EMEG activity – identify impact objectives indicators.

4.4. Preparing guidelines and formulate clear actions.

Guidelines are intended as a simple user-friendly check-list including all the attentions/precautions to be followed in developing a plan for the use and dissemination of research results.
The conceptual model will provide outcomes and criteria for the preparation of the guidelines.

Practical examples in disseminating research's results (implemented in EU-Med projects) will be collected and validated in accordance with criteria defined in the conceptual model (and possibly evaluated through the use of ad-hoc indicators).
A survey sheet (suitable to be fulfilled on-line) will be used in order to collect information about **success stories and practices** of dissemination and uptaking of research results, at EU-Med level, in the frame of the three thematic areas (water, food, energy). The following aspects will be considered:

- Aims and objectives (What are the potential areas, where the results, methods can be used? What are the tangible results for the practice?)
- Targets and beneficiaries (Who are the groups connected to society in the water/food/energy sector?)
- How the good practice is tailored to targets and beneficiaries.
- Resources (human, budgetary and time)
- Methods and tools of dissemination
- Evaluation /Lesson learnt
- Good practices indicators

The web-community (MEDSPRING AGORÀ) will be involved, when necessary, along the process. good practices represent a link with other projects EU-Med (e.g. ERA-WIDE).

For practical reasons, a limited number of practices will be chosen for each societal challenge. These will constitute a sort of repository (Atlas) of good practices. Such document will represent an annex of the Guidelines and will be integrated as geo-referenced database into the project website.

Finally, the Guidelines' structure could be the following:

- Introduction
- Objectives of the guidelines
- Glossary
- Methodological part: the conceptual model
- Guidelines
- Indicators list (evaluation of impacts)
- Atlas of good practices

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