

Published Article: How to Improve Impact Reporting for Sustainability

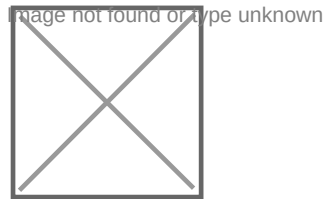
Project:

Setting the framework for the enhanced impact of SPIRE projects

Project website: www.spire2030.eu/spring ?

SPRING is a Coordination and Support Action project with the objective of increasing progression towards the SPIRE goals and enhancing project return on investment by addressing the needs and barriers of those who make the decisions to adopt process innovations in industry.

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme under grant agreement No 767412.



Sector:

Cement

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Ceramics

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Chemicals

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Engineering

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Non-ferrous metals

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Steel

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Water

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Summary:

Abstract: Measuring real-world impact is vital for demonstrating the success of a project and one of the most direct ways to justify taxpayers' contributions towards public funding. Impact reporting should identify and examine the potential positive and negative consequences of the continuing operations of a proposed project and suggest strategies to expand, further develop, mitigate, avoid or offset them. Designing a tool or methodology that will capture the impact of collaborative research and innovation projects related to sustainability requires input from technical experts but also from experts in the domains of survey design and communication. Without survey design insights and testing it can be very difficult to achieve unambiguous and accurate reporting of impacts. This paper proposes six key recommendations that should be considered for those monitoring projects when identifying metrics and designing a sustainability impact report. These recommendations stem from a series of in-depth interviews about sustainability and innovation impact reporting with research project co-ordinators in the process industries (e.g., cement, ceramics, chemicals, engineering, minerals and ores, non-ferrous metals, steel and water sectors). Our results show that factors such as ambiguous terminology, two-in-one questions, the stage of the project, over-hypothetical estimates, inadequate formats and alternatives and lack of guidelines can negatively influence the data collected in usual project monitoring activities and jeopardise the overall validity of the reporting. This work acts as a guideline for those monitoring to improve how they ask for impact data from projects, whether they are introducing new impact metrics or evaluating existing ones.

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