

Practical Guidance for the Valorisation of Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation Results

Study on the valorisation of multidisciplinary and Social Sciences
and Humanities results from Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe

Independent Expert Report



Practical Guidance for the Valorisation of Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation Results

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1. Introduction

The [EU policy for knowledge valorisation](#) has been established through the [Council Recommendation \(EU\) 2022/2415 on the Guiding Principles for Knowledge Valorisation](#). This guidance builds on that policy context and responds to the need to strengthen the [valorisation of multidisciplinary research](#), as explicitly recognised in the [ERA Policy Agenda 2025–2027](#)¹.

Knowledge valorisation is distinct from dissemination — the public disclosure of results — and from impact, which describes the change that research produces in the world. Valorisation is the deliberate activity that connects the two: transforming data, know-how, and research outputs into products, services, solutions, and knowledge-based policies that generate social and economic value.

Multidisciplinary research including Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) offers valuable solutions for addressing Europe's societal challenges. By integrating knowledge across disciplines and sectors, it can provide new policy perspectives, human-centred innovations, and business ideas. However, its potential is not always translated into broader societal, economic, and political value, and uptake needs to be accelerated.

It is also important for Europe's competitiveness to use a systematic approach for ensuring the uptake of multidisciplinary research results. The Draghi and Letta reports also make clear that reinforcing Europe's competitiveness requires more multi- and transdisciplinarity within the research and innovation system. Yet, multidisciplinary researchers often lack suitable guidance. Many existing valorisation frameworks are designed for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) research, for which metrics and technology transfer pathways are more established. **Now, this new guidance offers ten valorisation pathways built specifically for multidisciplinary research**, acknowledging their distinctive features and highlighting their impact on society and the economy. The pathways are practical tools for inspiration based on successful examples of existing practices, designed to help researchers discover and pursue possible routes towards impact that are often overlooked in existing frameworks.

To navigate the pathways, this guidance includes **two decision trees, a results-based one and an impact-based one**. The results-based decision tree starts from the researchers' existing results — data, findings, prototypes, or materials — and works forward to identify which pathways best match their needs. The impact-based decision tree starts from the change researchers want to create for society and works backward to identify the outputs, partners, and strategies needed to get there. **Both decision-trees are interactive and designed for exploration, allowing researchers to try different routes and consider more than one pathway.**

¹ Under Structural Policy 6 (Upscaling Knowledge Valorisation Capacities and Activities), there is an explicit commitment to providing policy guidance on increasing the uptake of multidisciplinary research and innovation results.

2. What are the ten valorisation pathways?

2.1. The pathways as inspirational tools

The ten valorisation pathways highlight distinct routes through which multidisciplinary research can generate societal and economic value. Each represents a different route towards impact: different outputs, different partners, different processes.

The pathways were developed through analysis of **one hundred multidisciplinary including SSH research and innovation projects**, complemented by forty interviews with project coordinators and valorisation professionals, and tested by sixty experts at a workshop.

This guidance is designed primarily, but not only, for owners of multidisciplinary research and innovation results such as researchers and their partners as well as institutional actors such as research organisations and knowledge valorisation intermediaries like knowledge transfer offices (KTOs).

Box 1 - How to read the pathways

What to expect from each pathway:

- guidance on identifying whether your research fits the pathway;
- examples showing what valorisation outputs and impacts could look like;
- ideas for actions that researchers and institutions can take.

Keep in mind that the pathways are:

- combinable - a single project may pursue several pathways simultaneously or shift between them;
- adaptable - the pathways are suggestions to be tailored to the project context and do not need to be followed mechanically;
- context dependent - valorisation outcomes are also affected by timing, institutional support, partner commitment, and policy context;
- collective endeavours - valorisation relies on the broad innovation ecosystem, including valorisation support intermediaries, not on individual researchers alone;
- open-ended - the pathways reflect current conditions and practices that will evolve.

2.2. A common structure for the ten pathways

This guidance presents the ten valorisation pathways using a common structure. To make them concrete and relatable, each pathway opens with a fictional researcher — a composite drawn from real situations encountered in interviews — whose discipline, project stage, and challenges bring the pathway to life. Their story picks up again later in the same pathway, showing what a realistic next step might look like. An example of such personas is described in the box below.

A researcher's story

Researcher X is a political scientist four years into a Horizon Europe project on misinformation in online health debates. Their team has produced strong findings — about who spreads misinformation, why, and what makes people resistant to correction. A policy brief was published last year. A journalist picked it up. Researcher X is convinced that their research could do more and is looking for inspiration for next steps.

After introducing the persona, each pathway is characterised by:

- describing its typical outputs and impacts;
- describing the kind of research that fits well;
- identifying the key contributors to pursue the pathway.

Valorisation relies on the wider R&I ecosystem. **Universities and research institutions** can provide structural support through knowledge transfer offices, legal services, and valorisation project management. **Knowledge valorisation intermediaries** can translate between research and practice, brokering partnerships and maintaining relationships beyond project cycles. **Funders** can shape what is feasible through programme design and incentives. **Policymakers** can influence demand through regulatory priorities and governance frameworks. These recurring roles are relevant across all pathways. Additionally, the individual pathway descriptions highlight key contributors that are specific to the respective pathway.

Finally, the pathway closes with **two project examples** inspired by real research and innovation projects, and **ideas for actions that can be taken** at micro level (researcher and project team) and meso level (universities, research organisations and intermediaries).

2.3. Two interactive decision trees to find your pathway(s)

The ten pathways cover a wide range of valorisation possibilities. To help researchers identify which pathway(s) best fit their situation, this guidance provides two interactive decision trees.

Each decision tree poses questions and guides users to a tailored selection of one or more pathways. Through clickable links, users are led to the next question or directly to the relevant pathway. This is an exploration process. Users can try different routes, return to the start, or switch between the two decision trees. Because most projects may fit more than one pathway, the decision trees can help find inspiration for next steps across pathways.

The two decision trees follow complementary logics:

Decision Tree 1 (results-based) starts from the project results and guides the user through two steps: *Step 1: “What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?”*, then *Step 2: “Who are your partners / target audience?”*, which points to one or more pathways.

Decision Tree 2 (impact-based) starts from the impact planned for the project and continues through three steps: *“Step 1: What kind of impact do you want to create?”*, *Step 2: “Who are your partners / target audience?”*, and *Step 3: “What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?”*

At every branching point, both decision trees also offer the option *“it is too early to say”*, routing users to a small selection of pathways for exploratory reading.

Results-based decision tree

Step 1: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Technology assessments and innovation tools	Evidence and policy briefs	Practical tools and toolkits	Platforms and digital infrastructure	Cultural and creative outputs
Technology assessment reports, impact scenarios, prototypes, demonstrators, ethical guidelines, standards, certification frameworks	Policy briefs, evidence syntheses or rapid reviews, impact analyses or evaluation reports, critical analysis or counter-narratives	Regulatory compliance toolkits, change-management approaches, ventures/spin-offs and business models, training programmes for organisations	Community-engagement platforms and methodologies, co-designed digital services, data dashboards	Performances, exhibitions, cultural engagement formats, heritage preservation, educational or therapeutic cultural resources
Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select
If it is too early to say, have a look at P1 , P2 , P6	If it is too early to say, have a look at P6 , P7 , P10	If it is too early to say, have a look at P3 , P4 , P5	If it is too early to say, have a look at P8 , P9	If it is too early to say, have a look at P6 , P8 , P10

Impact-based decision tree

Step 1: What kind of impact do you want to create?

Social and community impact	Economic and market impact	Political and governance impact	Cultural, educational and civic impact	Environmental and sustainability impact
Improved wellbeing, social cohesion, inclusion, equity, and empowerment in communities	Technology adoption and responsible innovation, organisational efficiency and competitiveness, sustainable business models and market opportunities, workforce adaptation and skills development	Policy effectiveness and evidence-based governance, systemic transitions (energy, health, mobility, migration), democratic participation and social cohesion, regulatory adaptation and compliance	Cultural vitality and social inclusion, public understanding and informed debate, community wellbeing and heritage preservation, countering misinformation and polarisation	Sustainable transitions (energy, food, mobility, climate adaptation)
Primary focus: Community wellbeing, social cohesion & equity	Primary focus: Market impact, technological solutions, organisational transformation	Primary focus: Policy change, systemic transformation, participatory governance	Primary focus: Cultural value, public engagement, civic empowerment	Primary focus: Sustainable systems transitions & climate resilience
Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select
If it is too early to say, have a look at P5 , P6 , P7 , P8 , P9 , P10	If it is too early to say, have a look at P1 , P2 , P3 , P4 , P5	If it is too early to say, have a look at P1 , P2 , P6 , P7 , P8	If it is too early to say, have a look at P2 , P5 , P9 , P10	If it is too early to say, have a look at P1 , P2 , P3 , P4 , P5 , P6 , P8

Pathway 1 - Human-centred technology solutions



A researcher's story: from technical solution to user adoption

Researcher 1 is a social psychologist in the final year of a Horizon Europe project developing AI-assisted hiring tools. The project has documented how these tools systematically disadvantage certain demographic groups — not through explicit bias, but through the proxies the algorithms use. Working with an engineering team, these findings have been translated into a bias-detection protocol and a set of design constraints now embedded in the technical specifications. Whilst this process was successful, ensuring adoption has proven challenging. The protocol was built for developers whereas the HR professionals who should deploy the tool are concerned about different aspects, such as liability, explaining decisions to candidates, or managing instances where the system flags someone incorrectly.

Researcher 1 has drafted an implementation guide for HR teams, which falls outside the original project scope and budget. Researcher 1 is now trying to determine whether a post-project pilot is feasible, and which of the consortium partners has the institutional capacity to carry it forward.

What are human-centred technology solutions?

This pathway brings together SSH and STEM researchers to develop innovations that are both technically feasible and socially grounded. The balance between SSH and STEM contributions may vary — some projects are primarily STEM-driven with SSH in a supporting role, while others are SSH-led with STEM providing technical implementation. Both configurations are valid. What matters is that social and human dimensions are integrated from the start.

SSH insights are critical, in multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary projects, to understand institutional, cultural, behavioural, and market dynamics; anticipate ethical or regulatory challenges; and ensure that new technologies can function within real-world contexts. An important early step is mapping the ecosystem: understanding who makes decisions, who holds resources, who needs the technology, and who is responsible for its deployment. This mapping shapes how SSH and STEM interact throughout the project.

What are the valorisation outputs and impacts?

Outputs from this pathway serve multiple stakeholders, for instance, companies seeking to understand market dynamics, policymakers developing evidence-informed governance frameworks for technologies, investors assessing business models, and public institutions

procuring technological solutions that are trustworthy and responsive to social needs. Examples of outputs include:

- human-centred technology prototypes incorporating user feedback into technical specifications;
- ethical frameworks and bias-detection protocols for emerging technologies, developed through simulated risk and failure scenarios rather than end-of-project compliance reports;
- technology adoption strategies informed by community concerns, barriers to uptake, and diverse user needs;
- accessibility and inclusivity frameworks ensuring technologies serve diverse populations, not just the average user.

With good conditions in place, potential long-term impacts include increased innovation capacity through better understanding of user needs, strengthened governance frameworks preventing unintended technology deployment, and greater readiness to adopt innovations across diverse communities.

Is your research a good fit?

This pathway suits multidisciplinary researchers whose work connects directly to technology development and who can translate social and behavioural insights into design decisions — ideally before key technical choices are locked. Research fits well if it:

- involves understanding human behaviour, social structures, or cultural dynamics in relation to technologies and their use;
- generates insights that can inform technological design or implementation decisions;
- engages with questions of accessibility, diversity, or inclusion in technology use.

If your work centres on building digital infrastructures or data platforms rather than technology co-design, see [Pathway 2 — Digital platforms for sustained community use](#). If your goal is large-scale systemic transformation across sectors, see [Pathway 6 — Collaborative innovations for systemic societal change](#).

Who are the key contributors?

In addition to the core ecosystem actors, described in the introduction, the following stakeholders can be specifically relevant when pursuing this pathway:

- STEM researchers and engineering teams are the primary partners. The quality of valorisation depends on whether SSH insights reach them before key design decisions are locked. They provide access to technical infrastructure and deployment pathways, while gaining user-centred design expertise and social validation frameworks.
- Start-ups and scale-ups can offer rapid testing environments and real-world deployment routes, while gaining SSH input on product-market fit, bias audits, and user adoption strategies.
- Technology firms can provide resources for large-scale pilots and industry networks, while gaining regulatory readiness, responsible innovation, and governance frameworks for data-driven services.

- Incubators and accelerators can embed criteria such as user adoption readiness, ethical risk, and social impact into their mentoring and selection processes. They can provide entrepreneurial training and access to portfolio companies, while gaining differentiated evaluation frameworks and socially validated ventures.

Researcher 1's story illustrates a common challenge of this pathway: bridging the gap between developing a useful tool and securing its real-world uptake. Whilst the work has produced both a bias-detection protocol and an implementation guide, a route to the organisations that will deploy the tool is still missing. HR professionals were not involved in building the tool, and their concerns — about liability, candidate communication, and edge cases — were not accounted for. The next step is to identify two or three HR teams willing to participate in a structured pilot before the project closes, using their feedback to stress-test the implementation guide and produce evidence of real-world usability. That evidence will likely determine whether the tool and the guide become outputs that can be credibly disseminated, or whether they remain internal artefacts.

Examples of projects that fall into this pathway:

Example 1: AI tools in the factory: designing for uptake with the workers

A consortium combining research institutes and industrial manufacturers set out to change how AI enters the smart factory — starting from the worker's perspective. The team began by observing and interviewing workers and industrial experts to understand needs, preferences, and the realities of daily practice. The resulting tools were piloted and adopted in several companies. Among these tools were: a task allocation system built around worker skills and preferences, a feedback dashboard on achievements and wellbeing, a virtual factory for testing design ideas with the work community, and gamified knowledge sharing.

Example 2: Assistive technology at home: designing for elderly users

A consortium of research institutes, assistive technology firms, and care organisations across several European countries set out to help elderly people who live independently at home. Psychologists, sociologists, and human-computer interaction researchers were part of the development from the start, working with elderly users and caregivers to shape the design. The resulting system combined sensor-equipped everyday objects, a virtual caregiving robot, and a digital functionality connecting each user to peers, family, and support professionals. It was tested in real homes across multiple national care systems.

What actions can be taken?

Actors at the micro level	1. Map who makes key technical decisions, who will deploy the tool, and who will use it before the research is scoped. 2. Engage technology partners and end users to co-define the problem, not only when testing and validating the solution. 3. Run rapid low-fidelity prototyping early. Use sketches, mock-ups, or diagrams to align multidisciplinary mental models before detailed technical work begins. 4. Simulate risk and failure scenarios and define social validation milestones before technical build. 5. Run adoption pilots with actual users before project close and identify how to remain involved as the tool is refined and deployed.
Actors at the meso level	1. Draw on existing interdisciplinary institutes or labs or work to develop these where they do not yet exist, as spaces where SSH and STEM researchers can work on shared problems. 2. Develop SSH liaison capacity within existing technology transfer offices by creating dedicated roles or adapting existing responsibilities. 3. Integrate ethics, user research and socially responsible design modules in engineering and design curricula, so multidisciplinary collaboration becomes a learned practice and standard rather than being introduced only for individual projects. 4. Develop recognition criteria that credit co-design across disciplines, including SSH contributions to technology solutions and STEM contributions to SSH-led solutions. 5. Connect multidisciplinary teams with sector associations, accelerators, and technology brokers through institutional partnerships.

Pathway 2 - Digital platforms for sustained community use



A researcher's story: aligning database design with user behaviour

Researcher 2 is a political scientist eighteen months into a Horizon Europe project that is building an open-access database of participatory democracy initiatives across Europe. The dataset is substantial — over 400 cases, systematically coded, with a metadata framework developed over 6 months. The platform's success depends as much on community engagement as on the database itself. But uptake by the community is uneven: some NGOs use the platform actively; others registered and disengaged. Researcher 2 partners with a civic tech organisation for user research. This shows that organisations use the database searching by country and topic, while the metadata is organised by theoretical category. The civic tech partner is helping redesign the search layer, but the long-term hosting of the platform is not secured yet.

What are digital platforms for sustained community use?

This pathway valorises knowledge through digital platforms that are used by a community and sustained beyond project funding. Such platforms cannot be designed alone: communities need to be involved from the outset in shaping the platform around their needs, habits, and expectations and with long-term maintenance planned early.

Key considerations at the heart of the pathway:

- The structure of the platform: metadata, classification, governance need to be designed for how intended users search and decide.
- The community around the platform: users who contribute, reuse, and take ownership, need to be supported by engagement mechanisms that give them a stake.

A digital platform in this pathway can be multidisciplinary in content or supported by SSH contributions with governance and community building. In the first case, research generates the typologies and comparable cases that give the platform reusable substance. In the second, the platform's content may come from administrative and civic data, and SSH contributes the metadata, governance, and user-fit that turns raw data into a resource a community can use. The two situations often overlap in practice.

There are risks to consider when pursuing this pathway:

- Ghost platforms — platforms that are technically sound and intellectually credible, but unused. Community cultivation requires specialised expertise, dedicated budget, and time.
- Post-project resources — project funding typically covers development but not always the infrastructure, data updates, and community management needed after the grant ends. Platform development includes early planning for longer-term maintenance.

Open data and open access principles belong in platform design as practical commitments from the beginning. They lower barriers to the reuse and contribution the platform depends on, and make it transferable if the original hosts cannot sustain it.

What are the valorisation outputs and impacts?

Outputs from this pathway serve multiple stakeholders, for instance, civil society organisations seeking structured evidence on social phenomena, public administrators requiring cross-sector data for service design, policymakers needing evidence that integrates social alongside technical indicators, and citizens engaging in participatory governance processes. Examples of outputs include:

- open-access databases, platforms and dashboards with standardised metadata;
- integrated data platforms bringing together information currently held in different institutional silos;
- decision-support dashboards combining social indicators with administrative or technical data;
- narrative and visual interface layers translating underlying data for non-specialists.

With good conditions in place, potential long-term impacts include sustained access to structured evidence for actors who previously could not reach it, coordination across institutions, and a stronger evidence base for decisions that integrate social with administrative or technical data.

Is your research a good fit?

This pathway suits researchers whose work produces systematic, structured data that can be aggregated across cases and scaled through digital infrastructure. Research fits well if it:

- addresses information accessibility challenges where fragmented data prevents effective decision-making;
- produces structured and comparable knowledge (typologies, frameworks, indicators) that can be systematically captured in databases;
- engages with communities or organisations that would directly benefit from and contribute to platform development;
- has identified or can build a committed user community willing to contribute to and govern the platform over time;
- has identified potential hosts (universities, sector associations, civic organisations) or business models for sustained platform maintenance beyond project funding.

If your work focuses on co-designing technology with users rather than building data infrastructure, see [Pathway 1 — Human-centred technology solutions](#). If your platform is built

primarily through participatory co-design with communities rather than as a data resource, see [Pathway 8 — Participatory or transdisciplinary social innovation](#).

Who are the key contributors?

Besides the core ecosystem actors, described in the introduction, the following stakeholders can be specifically relevant when pursuing this pathway:

- Public institutions and civic organisations often commission such solutions. They can provide access to users, legitimacy, and potential hosting while gaining structured evidence and decision-support tools.
- Technology developers and data engineers are essential, as platform development requires teams that combine technical expertise with social science knowledge on data governance, user needs, and community management.
- Intermediary organisations — civic tech groups, sector associations, knowledge brokers — can help a platform remain active, relevant, and used. They can identify sustainable business models, navigate institutional dynamics, and connect the platform to its long-term user base while gaining evidence-based platforms to engage with their networks.

Researcher 2's story reflects this pathway's focus on designing platforms around the needs and capacities of the communities they are meant to serve. The partnership with the civic tech organisation adds practical expertise on user engagement and platform design to the project. However, sustainability remains unresolved – no institution has yet committed to post-project platform maintenance. Researcher 2 is now actively seeking a sustainable hosting arrangement by engaging potential partners – the civic tech organisation, university infrastructure services, or sector associations – whilst simultaneously finalising the metadata redesign.

Examples of projects that fall into this pathway:

Example 1: Participatory democracy platform - sustaining community engagement

A research team created an open platform documenting participatory democratic processes worldwide through crowdsourcing. The project attracted strong early engagement from practitioners, with 1,800 case studies uploaded. However, as the volume grew, users found it increasingly difficult to locate relevant cases. The metadata framework that had been designed according to academic categories did not reflect how practitioners searched for information. As a result, practitioners' motivation to contribute and use the platform decreased. Drawing on the team's social research capacity proved decisive in addressing this challenge. Through user research, they identified practitioner search behaviours, which informed the redesign of the metadata architecture. The team also restructured platform governance to include practitioner advisory boards and developed recognition systems to sustain practitioners' engagement. These interventions helped keep the platform active and supported its wider uptake. The experience also highlighted the need to budget for community management from the outset.

Example 2: Housing condition data platform - addressing data fragmentation

A research consortium developed a data-driven platform integrating fragmented information about housing conditions to reduce buyer-seller conflicts. While technical interoperability between data sources was achievable, the project encountered a more fundamental challenge: data owners — municipalities, inspection agencies, and insurance companies — were reluctant to share information, fearing liability exposure and competitive disadvantage. Researchers

conducted stakeholder analysis to understand each data provider's risk perceptions and institutional incentives, designed governance arrangements that distributed liability in ways acceptable to all parties, and developed tailored value propositions demonstrating the benefits of participation. The case illustrates that platform development and data-sharing arrangements need to proceed in parallel from the outset, so that roles and concerns of different data owners can be accommodated.

What actions can be taken?

Actors at the micro level	1. Conduct user research before finalising the platform, and where relevant, before transferring or scaling it, so design choices reflect community needs and capacities. 2. Plan and budget for community management from the start, including the dedicated expertise, time and resources it requires. 3. Engage intermediary organisations early and secure a host arrangement before launch, like a signed commitment for long-term maintenance or a clear archiving strategy. Build open access and interoperability into the design, so the platform can be transferred to other hosts.
Actors at the meso level	1. Provide digital infrastructure and technical staff supporting multidisciplinary researchers in platform development. 2. Provide dedicated community management expertise and resources that can support projects across the organisation. 3. Develop data governance guidelines on aspects such as open access, intellectual property, benefit-sharing, and build partnerships with public bodies who may serve as long-term stewards by helping to maintain, host or govern the data.

Pathway 3 - Entrepreneurship and social innovation ventures



A researcher's story: Turning social acceptance research into a tool for responsible project development

Researcher 3 is a social scientist working on a Horizon Europe project. The project examined why offshore wind projects in coastal regions may face resistance from local residents and other affected stakeholders, focusing on trust, identity, and fairness perceptions that standard consultation processes often miss. Researcher 3's team developed a social acceptance methodology: a structured diagnostic run before and during community consultation that predicts opposition risk, identifies its sources, and generates a tailored engagement protocol. It was tested on six planned wind installations across three European countries. In two cases, developers using the methodology secured planning approval significantly faster than comparable projects in the same region. A European renewable energy developer active across eight EU member states has approached Researcher 3. They want to license the methodology as a standard tool across all their project development pipelines. The value for the company is clear: project delays are costly, and meaningful engagement with affected communities is both part of regulatory compliance and crucial to reducing delays, building trust, and improving project delivery. Researcher 3 is open to exploring but wants to make sure that their social acceptance methodology is applied as intended.

What are entrepreneurship and social innovation ventures?

This pathway enables researchers to translate their knowledge about social challenges, market opportunities, and sustainable business models into ventures that generate both economic and social value.

Research-driven ventures can span a wide range of contexts: market failures, organisational inefficiencies, cultural needs, social welfare concerns, and economic opportunities across sectors. Researchers can become entrepreneurs — creating a spin-out or social venture — or pursue other commercialisation routes such as licensing or consultancy, which generate economic and social value alongside their academic work. What defines this pathway is that multidisciplinary knowledge is the commercial foundation, not a supporting input. A venture grounded in multidisciplinary research can be for-profit, not-for-profit, or hybrid.

What are the valorisation outputs and impacts?

Outputs from this pathway serve multiple stakeholders, for instance, social investors and impact funds seeking evidence-based ventures, communities and public institutions looking for responses to social challenges, entrepreneurs looking to translate knowledge into market solutions. Examples of outputs include:

- licensed multidisciplinary methodologies and diagnostic tools generating recurring revenue for researchers and institutions — such as social acceptance assessments for infrastructure developers, consumer behaviour models for retail, or practical frameworks for firms to support workers through digital transformation;
- spin-offs and social ventures built on multidisciplinary knowledge — for-profit, not-for-profit, or hybrid — where the research is the core value proposition;
- consultancy services drawing on expertise from multidisciplinary including SSH research — bias audits, stakeholder risk mapping, cultural due diligence — where the researcher or team provides knowledge as a service rather than building a standalone venture.

With good conditions in place, potential long-term impacts include new revenue streams from research-based IP, competitive advantages for firms integrating social and behavioural intelligence to identify underserved markets, and commercially viable solutions that address them in more tailored ways.

Is your research a good fit?

This pathway is valuable for researchers with validated insights about social needs or market opportunities that could be developed into a venture or integrated into an established business. The research fits well if it:

- produces outputs such as frameworks, tools, methodologies that could be licensed;
- has generated evidence of real-world effects — such as reduced planning delays, improved adoption rates, changed user behaviour, or cost savings — that could address the need of a public or private sector partner, or demonstrate impact potential to an investor.

Who are the key contributors?

Besides the core ecosystem actors, described in the introduction, the following stakeholders can be specifically relevant when pursuing this pathway:

- Social enterprise accelerators and impact investors can provide the mentorship, market access, and staged funding that bridge the gap between a research-based idea and a viable venture while gaining evidence-based ventures with measurable social impact.
- Organisations such as NGOs, municipalities, public health bodies and schools may serve as first buyers or partners and become long-term ones. They can provide pilot sites and evidence of real-world effects while gaining innovative solutions responding to social needs.
- Established companies as licensing or consultancy clients may offer researchers an opportunity to apply their insights and generate revenue alongside their academic work, while using research insights to improve products, services, or processes.

Researcher 3's story illustrates how a research result can be translated into a practical industry application through licensing. The methodology exists, it has been tested, and a commercial partner with scale has identified its value. The next step for Researcher 3 is to approach their university's knowledge transfer office to explore what a licensing agreement could look like. If the office has no experience with this kind of arrangement, an external intellectual property specialist can be brought in. An exchange with the office or a specialist should clarify how the methodology can be protected and transferred, and what conditions could be set for using the methodology in practice. Relevant conditions may include protecting the quality of application, preserving publication rights, and ensuring Researcher 3's active involvement in tailoring and further developing the tool. These conditions matter to Researcher 3 because they want the methodology to support meaningful community engagement, generate further credible evidence for publication, and avoid it being used only as a checkbox for risk assessment. A tailored licensing agreement should therefore include these aspects and specify that the social acceptance methodology should be applied through structured engagement with affected communities, including consultation, feedback loops and transparent communication. This approach allows Researcher 3 to remain focused on their academic role, whilst acting as methodological authority and adviser to the industry partner.

Examples of projects that fall into this pathway:

Example 1: Sustainable fashion – influencer engagement for responsible purchasing

Entrepreneurship researchers developed a platform that helps fashion brands work with social media influencers to support more sustainable purchasing. The business model drew on behavioural research on consumer motivations and connected brands with influencers through an evidence-based engagement model. The SSH contribution was the core of the venture: behavioural research showed how consumers relate to fashion through everyday stories, self-expression, and social belonging, not only through environmental awareness. These insights shaped an engagement model based on credible storytelling, long-term brand trust and more responsible purchasing, rather than maximising short-term sales. This model became the basis for a subscription platform offered to brands.

Example 2: Women-led chicken businesses - navigating gender norms

A consortium launched women-led chicken breeding businesses in African countries, combining agricultural economics with gender studies research. The research foundation of the venture was a household negotiation framework — developed from fieldwork on intra-family economic dynamics — that was built directly into the business model alongside the commercial training. Women received not only business skills but practical tools for managing household finances. The model was adopted by a regional development agency and scaled to additional districts, demonstrating that gender-informed business design could be both commercially viable and replicable.

What actions can be taken?

Actors at the micro level	1. Engage your knowledge transfer office early on IP, licensing terms, and publication rights, and check whether additional expertise is needed tailored to your outputs. 2. Engage communities and potential end users to test whether findings address genuine needs. 3. Consider which commercialisation route fits your situation — licensing, consultancy, or a spin-out — and what each implies for your ongoing academic role, IP ownership, and how your work can be applied in practice.
Actors at the meso level	1. Develop multidisciplinary-focused incubation and mentorship support by adapting existing programmes or establishing new pathways where gaps exist, considering seed funding for early-stage community testing. 2. Develop guidance in knowledge transfer offices covering the full range of business and governance models. 3. Connect researchers with social enterprise accelerators, impact investors, and organisations that have capacity and interest to pilot research-based solutions.

Pathway 4 - Organisational transformation



A researcher's story: securing organisational commitment for change

Researcher 4 is an organisational sociologist who has spent twenty years studying workplace culture in public institutions. The researcher is two years into a research project with a large public hospital on staff wellbeing and burnout prevention. The findings are detailed and actionable — identifying specific management practices, shift patterns, and communication failures as causes of burnout across three departments. They have been translated into a diagnostic framework and a draft change management protocol ready for piloting. The difficulty is that the HR director who originally commissioned the work has changed twice since the project began. Researcher 4 is now exploring next steps to anchor the work institutionally before the project closes.

What is organisational transformation?

Organisational transformation applies multidisciplinary expertise to help businesses, public bodies, and civil society organisations navigate complex and evolving environments. Researchers work directly with organisational leadership, HR managers, and public sector administrators to diagnose organisational dynamics and support operational and cultural change — whether linked to new regulations, digital tools, service redesign, or changing stakeholder expectations. What distinguishes this pathway is its focus on changing how organisations function: their culture, structures, governance, and everyday practices. By addressing these organisational conditions, the pathway can support the longer-term uptake of relevant research results.

Researchers contribute frameworks, diagnostic instruments, and evidence-based approaches that help organisations understand how change is experienced, what concerns may need to be addressed, and what conditions can support effective implementation. The pathway is particularly valuable where formal policies or technical solutions alone are not enough to achieve organisational transformation, because the underlying cultural, behavioural, or structural factors need to be addressed as well.

This is distinct from [Pathway 5 - Human capital and organisational capacity building](#), which focuses on developing the skills and capabilities of individuals within organisations. In practice, the two often complement each other, but the primary lever here is organisational rather than individual.

What are the valorisation outputs and impacts?

Outputs from this pathway serve organisations navigating complex changes, public sector organisations implementing policy reforms, professional service providers advising clients on compliance, and policymakers designing proportionate and effective regulations. Examples of outputs include:

- organisational diagnostic and evaluation frameworks enabling systematic assessment of cultural, structural, or governance conditions and whether change initiatives have the intended effect;
- change management toolkits translating research insights into practical implementation guides;
- training modules for staff on updated processes, cultural change initiatives, or stakeholder engagement approaches.

With good conditions in place, potential long-term impacts include more resilient and adaptive organisations better equipped to manage technological, market, or regulatory changes. It can also lead to improved working conditions and more inclusive organisational practices as well as enhanced consumer protection and better public services.

Is your research a good fit?

Research contributes to an understanding of organisational dynamics, cultural contexts, behavioural patterns, and market forces which shape how public and private organisations function and adapt. This expertise is valuable when organisations need to navigate an evolving environment. Research fits well if it:

- identifies where and why specific practices, structures, or routines shape organisational performance and affect the implementation of change;
- explores the gap between formal policies and actual organisational practice;
- is strengthened by direct engagement with organisational reality — through co-development, embedded fieldwork, or iterative refinement with practitioners.

Who are the key contributors?

Besides the core ecosystem actors, described in the introduction, the following stakeholders can be specifically relevant when pursuing this pathway:

- Public sector organisations such as hospitals, public administrations, or government agencies can be both clients and sites of organisational transformation, often facing regulatory or policy-driven change. They can provide researchers access to study organisational dynamics, while they can gain diagnostic support and evidence-based change protocols from researchers' insight.
- Private sector companies — particularly those managing digital transformation, regulatory change, or restructuring — can provide real-world operational contexts while gaining competitive advantage through improved organisational culture and structure.
- Business intermediaries such as chambers of commerce, industry clusters, or sector associations can connect researchers with companies and help translate between academic research and operational business language while gaining evidence-based advisory tools for their members.

Researcher 4's story illustrates that research-based tools for organisational transformation become actionable when there is a clear route to integrate them into organisational decision-making processes. The diagnostic framework and change management protocol have been developed. They need an institutional owner committed to implementation. The critical next step is to engage the new HR director or identify a department manager willing to co-sponsor a scoped pilot within a single department – framed as an operational improvement initiative rather than a research output. At this juncture, institutional support proves essential. Researcher 4's knowledge transfer office could be actively facilitating this engagement by presenting the pilot in operational terms, helping negotiate for managerial commitment, and defining the conditions needed to pilot and scale the tools within the hospital.

Examples of projects that fall into this pathway:

Example 1: Fairness and inclusion – from policy measures to organisational practice

Researchers partnered with firms to test HR measures designed to improve fairness and inclusion such as structured hiring criteria, anonymised screening, and promotion review procedures. Initial interventions based on behavioural economics showed promising results in controlled settings but had limited effect when introduced in actual organisations. The researchers understood that formal policy interventions were counteracted by informal workplace practices and middle managers who were concerned about losing discretion over day-to-day decisions. The team redesigned their approach by including field experiments and a more structured engagement with middle management. The revised interventions showed measurable improvements and highlighted that sustainable change requires attention to both formal structures and informal organisational practices simultaneously.

Example 2: Agricultural business succession – building trust with farming families

Researchers developing a Knowledge Centre for agricultural business succession encountered difficulties when seeking to engage farming families who were unsure whether academic researchers understood their realities. Initial workshops attracted limited participation, and farmers questioned whether researchers understood the emotional complexity of family business transitions. The team realised their academic framing did not resonate with their target audience. They used a Living Lab methodology, positioning farmers as active partners rather than research subjects. This required researchers to share control over research design and recognise that farmers' priorities were as important as business metrics.

What actions can be taken?

Actors at the micro level	1. Identify a potential partner with demonstrated commitment to addressing the problem your research identifies. 2. Work with practitioners to translate findings into co-developed, actionable formats that an organisation can use such as diagnostic frameworks, change protocols, or evidence summaries. 3. Pilot practical tools in a single unit or context before the project closes, framed as an operational improvement initiative rather than a research output. 4. Document what worked and under what conditions, so the approach can be adopted by similar organisations without your direct involvement.
Actors at the meso level	1. Strengthen knowledge transfer networks that connect researchers with businesses, public organisations, and professional service providers. 2. Provide project management and legal support for complex multi-partner agreements and consider flexible contractual models for researchers that provide time for relationship building and embedded fieldwork.

Pathway 5 - Human capital and organisational capacity building



A researcher's story: implementing peer observation methodology at scale

Researcher 5 is in the second year of a postdoctoral fellowship in business and management studies. The research examines how manufacturing supervisors transfer operational knowledge to newer colleagues. Results show that the most effective transfer happens through structured peer observation: experienced supervisors narrating their decision-making while newer colleagues shadow them during high-stakes tasks. These findings are codified into a peer observation methodology. Reflection prompts help experienced supervisors articulate the reasoning they usually take for granted, while newer colleagues develop their own judgement. The methodology has been tested with two companies and published in a peer-reviewed article. The participating companies are members of a manufacturing association and have suggested scaling the methodology through the association. Researcher 5 sees the potential but has not worked at this scale, has no team and the funding timeline is too short for such an ambitious project.

What is human capital and organisational capacity building?

This pathway enables researchers to translate their expertise into interventions that build skills, capabilities, and the ability to reflect on and improve practices for individuals, professional communities, and organisations. Where [Pathway 4 —Organisational transformation](#) focuses on changing how organisations function — their structures, cultures, and governance — this pathway focuses on developing the people within them: their competencies, professional practices, and capacity to learn and adapt. SSH insights provide the evidence base for designing, delivering, and evaluating training programmes, learning tools, and capacity-building.

What are the valorisation outputs and impacts?

Outputs from this pathway serve professional communities and training providers seeking to upskill practitioners, employers and industry associations investing in workforce development, public and third-sector organisations building adaptive capacity, and educators designing curricula grounded in evidence. Examples of outputs include:

- training programmes, curricula, and educational materials for targeted professional audiences;
- online learning platforms, including those integrating behavioural insights;

- practitioner guidance addressing new or changing professional tasks, such as working with new user groups or adapting to regulatory change;
- facilitation methodologies and participatory tools for capacity building in public or third-sector organisations.

With good conditions in place, potential long-term impacts include improved professional practice, stronger institutional capacity to address complex challenges, more accessible and inclusive educational opportunities as well as competency frameworks that can be transferred across organisations, sectors, or different policy contexts.

Is your research a good fit?

Research fits this pathway if it:

- focuses on how professionals learn, develop skills and competencies, or adapt their practice — and where existing training or development approaches can be improved;
- has identified specific skill gaps or capacity deficits in a given (professional) community;
- produces knowledge that can be embedded in learning interventions — curricula, training tools, practitioner guidance — and refined with the people who will use them.

If your aim is to change how organisations function (their culture, governance, or structures) rather than develop the capacities of the individuals within them, see [Pathway 4 — Organisational transformation](#). If your aim is to contribute to public discourse and critical thinking among wider audiences rather than developing competencies in identifiable professional communities, see [Pathway 10 — Public discourse and informed citizenship](#).

Who are the key contributors?

Besides the core ecosystem actors, described in the introduction, the following stakeholders can be specifically relevant when pursuing this pathway:

- Sectoral associations and professional bodies can provide access to pilot partners and to opportunities for scaling. They often have practitioner networks, established communication channels, and credibility with their members while they can gain validated training methodologies and professional development programmes from collaboration with researchers.
- Vocational training providers and corporate training departments may help co-create research-informed curricula and can later act as buyers or implementation and scaling partners. Their involvement can be decisive in whether tools reach beyond the original pilot.
- Community organisations, NGOs, and support providers can connect researchers with their target groups, help build trust, and provide contextual knowledge. Through collaboration with researchers, they can gain capacity-building tools for the communities they serve.

Researcher 5's story shows that human capital and organisational capacity building depend on clear coordination of roles and resources, alongside training structures enabling others to apply the methodology beyond the original research setting. The next step for researcher 5 to explore the scaling potential of the peer observation methodology is to ask their university's knowledge transfer office to help map out a staged pilot and draft a scoping document. This should set out what each party would contribute, how the pilot would be delivered, and how a train-the-trainer component could be built in from the outset, so that companies can eventually introduce the methodology without the researcher's involvement. Researcher 5 could provide the methodology, design the training and ensure quality of the peer observation protocols, while the association could provide coordination and recruit companies to participate which would identify supervisor pairs. The draft scoping document can be used to pitch the pilot to the association and then developed jointly to define roles, expectations and how the association can support company buy-in to secure the necessary resources. That joint scoping document can then serve as the basis for researcher 5 to request a fellowship extension, explore further institutional support or external resources.

Examples of projects that fall into this pathway:

Example 1: English writing assessment – from training tool to professional learning

Researchers developed an online training tool to help teachers assess students' English writing more consistently. In pilot testing, the tool showed promising results, but teachers found the interface difficult to navigate and that the automated feedback did not reflect how they made assessment decisions in practice. Some were also reluctant to use benchmark scores that highlighted inconsistencies across their assessments, experiencing this as criticism of their professional competences without clearly showing how to apply the feedback. The researcher recognised that the tool's objective — supporting professional development, rather than correcting teachers' practice — needed to be clearer. They simplified the interface based on extensive user testing and added features allowing teachers to compare their assessment with that of peers as part of a shared professional learning process. This required additional development time and delayed scaling but proved effective for moving the tool from pilot testing toward wider adoption.

Example 2: Developmental disabilities support app – centring users for sustained use

Researchers developed an app to support adults with developmental disabilities in building community connections with peers and accessing services such as community support networks, healthcare and employment support. Initial pilot users engaged enthusiastically, but regular use declined after three months as the novelty wore off. Users found it too burdensome to regularly record their activities to assess service needs in the app. The project team realised that the design had relied too much on feedback from professional support workers and not enough on the experiences of adults with developmental disabilities themselves. Further user research showed that users valued the community connection features more than self-assessment functions for service needs that researchers and support workers had prioritised. The team restructured the app to make peer connection more central and reduced recording burden. Moreover, they created train-the-trainer programmes for support workers, so that users could receive practical help on using the app from people they already knew and trusted.

What actions can be taken?

Actors at the micro level	1. Identify partners such as sectoral associations, training providers, or professional bodies that have established channels to reach practitioners at scale and can mediate capacity building. 2. Co-develop tools with the people who will use them and build in a train-the-trainer component from the outset so the methodology can be applied without the original project team. 3. Test in real-world settings, document what works and under what conditions and produce outputs like manuals or evidence summaries that others can adopt independently.
Actors at the meso level	1. Build long-term partnerships with sectoral associations and training providers who can serve as scaling channels for research-informed curricula. 2. Support researchers to integrate their tools in curricula and training programmes and navigate formal approval and quality assurance.

Pathway 6 - Collaborative innovations for systemic societal change



A researcher's story: managing partnerships in food system transformation

Researcher 6 is a senior human geographer four years into a large Horizon Europe project on urban food systems transformation. The consortium brings together twelve partners across six countries — municipalities, NGOs, food producers, a logistics company, and two STEM research groups working on supply chain modelling. Pilots have been established in three cities. On paper, the project appears to be progressing well. In practice, Researcher 6 spends a significant share of their time keeping the consortium partnership aligned. The municipalities are oriented toward visible achievements within electoral cycles. The NGOs are committed to structural change on a longer time horizon. The STEM partners are focused on publications and have limited availability for consortium governance. Much of the coordination work falls to Researcher 6 as scientific coordinator. The clearest progress is in the smallest pilot city, where a municipal food council has developed into a functioning community of practice that meets independently of the project. The consortium has begun documenting this pilot as a replicable transition model that other cities could adopt. Researcher 6 now needs to decide how to use the remaining project time: coordinating across all pilots or focusing on the model that has the strongest potential to last beyond the project.

What are collaborative innovations for systemic societal change?

This pathway enables multidisciplinary researchers to collaborate with policymakers and cross-sectoral partners in co-designing systemic transformations across societal systems such as energy, mobility & transport, climate, and health. It integrates technical innovations with behavioural insights and governance frameworks to achieve scalable and sustainable change.

The pathway is defined by three features: it targets complex challenges that require systemic change; it connects technological development with social, organisational and policy realities; and it requires coordination across multiple governance levels, connecting local pilots to regional, national, or EU policy frameworks.

Multidisciplinary researchers can play a bridging role — connecting technical experimentation with social and governance dimensions, helping actors develop a shared language and align objectives.

Systemic change cannot simply be designed and managed — it requires navigating political constraints, vested interests, path dependencies and outcomes that materialise over a longer time horizon. Power asymmetries must be explicitly acknowledged and addressed. A culture of

trial and error needs to be actively cultivated: researchers and partners must create space for experimentation and accept failure as part of shared learning. As a result, valorisation in this pathway is less predictable than in others — outputs may be robust while system-level impact remains contingent on political conditions, partner commitment, global dynamics and timing that no single project controls.

What are the valorisation outputs and impacts?

Outputs from this pathway serve policymakers and societal actors navigating major societal transitions. Examples of outputs include:

- transition models documenting how change was achieved in specific systems and what lessons can be applied to other contexts;
- multi-level governance arrangements — coordination mechanisms and decision-making protocols — enabling alignment between local pilots and broader policy frameworks;
- facilitation tools that help stakeholders clarify values and priorities, build shared understanding and align environmental, economic, and equity objectives;
- communities of practice sustaining cross-sectoral learning and coordination beyond individual project lifecycles;
- integrated solutions that adapt technical or infrastructural intervention to governance, user behaviours and institutional conditions — for example, for energy systems, mobility platforms or health technologies.

With good conditions in place, this pathway can contribute to more effective societal responses to complex challenges — by sustaining cross-sector collaboration and integrating technical and social knowledge.

Is your research a good fit?

Researchers in this pathway analyse governance arrangements, institutional dynamics, and stakeholder behaviour across complex multi-actor systems. They design deliberative processes that make trade-offs and value conflicts explicit, and they study why technically feasible solutions gain or lose traction in political, institutional, cultural, and social contexts. The research fits well if it:

- addresses a challenge within a societal system - energy, mobility, health, food, urban development - where change requires both a technological or infrastructural transition and coordinated action across multiple governance levels (local, regional, national, EU) and across multiple sectors and institutions simultaneously;
- examines how governance dynamics, behavioural patterns, or institutional structures enable or block systemic transformation — not just within a single organisation but across a system;
- involves aligning different priorities, capacities, and responsibilities among actors to facilitate cooperation around shared objectives.

If your goal is primarily to inform policy through evidence rather than co-design systemic change across sectors, see [Pathway 7 — Evidence-informed policy advancement](#). If your work focuses on technology co-design rather than systemic transformation, see [Pathway 1 — Human-centred technology solutions](#). If your work centres on participatory co-design with communities rather

than cross-sectoral system change, see [Pathway 8 — Participatory or transdisciplinary social innovation](#).

Who are the key contributors?

Besides the core ecosystem actors, described in the introduction, the following stakeholders can be specifically relevant when pursuing this pathway:

- National and supranational organisations such as government agencies, international bodies, and multilateral institutions can act as agenda setters, shaping priorities, regulatory frameworks, and funding conditions while gaining evidence-informed policy frameworks and systemic transition models.
- Municipalities and regional authorities can be partners for co-creation. They can provide research teams access to local experimentation and implementation settings, can commission pilots, and are often key decision-makers for systemic change at local level. They can gain transition models and evidence-informed change strategies from collaborating with researchers.
- Corporate actors in the relevant system (utilities, logistics companies, food producers, health manufacturers) can bring implementation capacity and sector expertise without which transition pilots cannot function.
- Societal actors such as civil society organisations, community groups, and advocacy networks can help researchers understand local needs, connect with affected communities and build trust. In return, they can gain evidence and tools to support their work for the communities and causes they serve.

Researcher 6's story illustrates how valorisation through collaborative innovation for systemic societal change depends on turning partnership work into durable structures and transferable models. In this case, the most promising route is to concentrate resources on the city where collaboration is already becoming embedded. The next step is to develop a post-project sustainability plan for the municipal food council, specifying the roles, resources and coordination needed for it to continue without project infrastructure. At the same time, the transition model should be documented in enough detail for another city to adopt it without the consortium's involvement. This would turn the strongest pilot into both a lasting local structure and a practical model for wider uptake.

Examples of projects that fall into this pathway:

Example 1: Urban mobility transition - navigating multi-stakeholder collaboration

Transport researchers who partnered with city authorities and transport operators to redesign urban mobility encountered differences between stakeholders' priorities. City planners wanted reduced car use for climate goals; transport operators needed revenue from existing services; residents feared service cuts in peripheral areas. Early pilot designs favouring climate goals faced opposition from peripherally based residents and transport unions. Researchers discovered their models had prioritised environmental over equity concerns. The transport operator was concerned about revenue loss and considered withdrawing from the project. Researchers developed deliberative processes to explore trade-offs and acceptable compromises, using participatory scenario planning to make value conflicts explicit and compare different options and their implications. The final design was less efficient from a technical perspective, but more acceptable to the actors involved.

Example 2: Urban carbon transition — integrating technical tools with multi-stakeholder governance

A consortium of SSH and STEM researchers worked with five European cities to reduce carbon emissions through urban planning, for example by identifying where renewable energy infrastructure could be integrated into the urban environment. City officials shared common challenges: ambitious climate targets, limited policy instruments, and the need to align a diverse stakeholder group including citizens, businesses, utilities, and municipal departments around workable options. STEM researchers developed an open-source geographical mapping tool that showed potentials for integrating renewable energy and modelled CO₂ reduction scenarios. SSH researchers designed deliberative processes bringing the stakeholders together to co-produce transition pathways. The technical data gave the deliberations a shared evidence base; the governance process helped turn the technical outputs into socially acceptable solutions the cities could implement. Neither worked without the other. The transferable outputs — a governance framework and the open-source mapping tool — were subsequently adopted by cities across Europe without the original consortium's involvement.

What actions can be taken?

Actors at the micro level	1. Engage co-creation partners such as municipalities, utilities, or NGOs from project inception, defining shared objectives and roles collaboratively. 2. Build and maintain a community of practice as part of the project, not a communication activity only. 3. Create space for experimentation by allocating a budget for pilots that may need to be adjusted or discontinued but enable learning. 4. Document processes and learning systematically. One well-documented model that others can adapt is more transferable than several small pilots with limited follow-up.
Actors at the meso level	1. Work with existing transition research centres or cross-sector networks that connect research, policy and practice. Where such structures are missing, support partnerships or advisory arrangements that can provide this bridging function. 2. Build long-term institutional relationships with key organisations in relevant sectors and create secondment programmes that enable mutual learning among researchers and practitioners and practical insight into each other's work. 3. Invest in building communities of practice as long-term institutional assets with dedicated coordination to support learning and collaboration across projects.

Pathway 7 - Evidence-informed policy advancement



A researcher's story: translating historical research into a parliamentary rapid review

Researcher 7 is a historian of public administration. Their recent work examines how European states reorganised their auditing institutions after financial crises in the twentieth century: which reforms lasted, which were reversed, and what distinguished the two. The research is detailed, archivally grounded, and mainly read by other historians. A policy officer at the research service of the national parliament contacted Researcher 7. A parliamentary committee is preparing hearings on proposed reforms to the national court of auditors and is looking for evidence on how similar reforms fared in other countries. They have asked for a rapid review: ten pages, in six weeks, structured around the specific reform options the committee is considering. Researcher 7 has not written in this format before. The archival evidence is rich but context-specific, while the committee needs a concise review that presents relevant examples, explains uncertainty and helps members compare options. The knowledge transfer office of Researcher 7's institute has connected them with a policy think tank to help with framing and editing the review. The next step is to clarify the committee's key questions and expectations, the collaboration with the think tank and to confirm how this work will be recognised by the university, which treats the review as service, not research.

What is evidence-informed policy advancement?

This pathway enables researchers to translate findings into evidence-based insights for policy, regulation and governance. Researchers can contribute by providing analysis to policymakers about human behaviour, social systems, legal frameworks, economic conditions, historical precedents, ethical questions, technical evidence or the likely impacts of different policy options. When different forms of expertise are combined — for example labour market economics, environmental law, urban sociology, modelling, simulation or digital twin approaches — this can produce recommendations that are both technically sound and socially workable.

This pathway represents one of the most established forms of multidisciplinary valorisation. It can be carried out by individual researchers and research teams directly, but it benefits from science-for-policy bodies, policy liaison offices, knowledge brokers and established connections to decision-makers. Institutional support can help make this work more visible, better recognised and easier to sustain. Stronger recognition and coordination support can incentivise researchers to engage with policymakers, amplify the reach and create more regular pathways for future policy collaboration.

What are the valorisation outputs and impacts?

Outputs from this pathway can serve public authorities at regional, national, local, and supranational levels; legislative committees using evidence for drafting laws; think tanks working on policy analysis; and advocacy organisations informing public debate. Examples of outputs include:

- evidence syntheses and rapid reviews informing legislative processes;
- policy briefs and recommendations for public authorities;
- impact assessments and policy analysis frameworks that help policymakers compare options and make informed decisions;
- feedback and monitoring frameworks for assessing policy outcomes and impacts.

Potential long-term impacts include better understanding of policy challenges, more tailored policy design and implementation, stronger institutional capacity for evidence-informed governance, and increased public trust in policymaking.

Is your research a good fit?

This pathway suits researchers whose work relates directly to active policy questions and can help policymakers understand challenges, compare options or assess likely impacts. The research fits well if it:

- covers questions that policymakers want to address, or that align with an ongoing legislative or regulatory process where evidence may be needed;
- analyses regulatory effectiveness, governance processes, policy impacts or future developments through foresight in ways that inform specific policy choices.

If your aim is to contribute to public discourse and democratic capacity rather than inform specific policy decisions, see [Pathway 10 — Public discourse and informed citizenship](#).

Who are the key contributors?

Besides the core ecosystem actors, described in the introduction, the following stakeholders can be specifically relevant when pursuing this pathway:

- Think tanks and policy institutes can act as intermediaries by helping maintain engagement in policy debates, presenting research in policy-relevant formats and keeping evidence accessible beyond individual project cycles.
- Parliamentary research services and governments' science advice bodies can commission or use rapid evidence reviews and policy analysis, representing a route into policy and legislative processes.

Researcher 7's story shows how evidence-informed policy advancement often depends on translating specialised research into formats that fit policy timelines, questions and decision processes. Valorisation through this pathway is not about simplifying research but about making its relevance clear enough for policymakers to use when comparing options. The immediate step is a short scoping conversation with the policy officer. This should clarify the three or four questions the committee most needs answered, the reform options currently under discussion, and what other evidence is being collected so that the review can complement it. The policy institute can then help structure the rapid review

around those questions, using a style that is clear, concise and still transparent about uncertainty. Researcher 7 should also engage their research institute early to clarify how this work will be recognised. With the right support, the review could become both a useful input to the committee's work as well as a basis for further research and policy engagement.

Examples of projects that fall into this pathway:

Example 1: Climate policy dialogue platform – translating research into policy evidence

A multi-national research team established dialogue platforms connecting climate researchers with policymakers on climate adaptation planning. Initial meetings showed that the complex modelling results were difficult for both scientists and policymakers to apply to concrete policy decisions. They were not clearly linked to the decisions policymakers had to make, the options under consideration, or the timing of planning processes. Policymakers needed evidence that helped them compare different adaptation options, while remaining clear about uncertainty and the limits of the evidence. The team restructured the platform and brought in professional facilitators for knowledge brokering. They developed shorter briefing formats and helped researchers present findings in language, formats and timelines relevant for the policymakers. The revised approach showed that effective science-policy dialogue requires not only high-quality evidence, but also the capacity to translate research into evidence for policy decisions.

Example 2: Innovation Policy Network - sustaining engagement beyond funding

Researchers established a national innovation policy network bringing together government officials, academics, and practitioners around Smart Specialisation Strategy implementation. During the project period, the network was very active, organising well-attended workshops and developing joint policy briefs. However, as project funding neared its end, it became clear that continued engagement would require more resources for further coordination, as well as collaboration with a national innovation agency to develop a fee-for-service model to ensure continuity for the network. Participating organisations contributed costs for continued coordination, while the innovation agency provided a stable coordination contact point and helped align the network with ongoing policy needs. Academic participants remained involved through research-based contributions and future collaborative work. This transition required securing institutional buy-in but helped turn a project-based network into a more sustainable platform for evidence-informed policy exchange.

What actions can be taken?

Actors at the micro level	1. Build networks across public authorities, academia, and civil society around shared domains and maintain them beyond individual projects. 2. Develop accessible outputs like policy briefs or rapid evidence syntheses alongside academic publications. 3. Track policy developments in your field to anticipate when evidence will be sought and respond to public consultations and parliamentary inquiries.
Actors at the meso level	1. Develop or strengthen dedicated policy engagement capacity through knowledge broker roles liaising between researchers and policymakers, or by building partnerships with think tanks and policy institutes. 2. Build long-term institutional relationships with public authorities and parliamentary research services through framework agreements or standing advisory roles. 3. Coordinate institutional responses to public consultations and support stable, diverse funding for policy-relevant research teams, so their analyses remain independent and useful across different political contexts.

Pathway 8 - Participatory or transdisciplinary social innovation



A researcher's story: adapting a participatory tool across communities

Researcher 8 is a social anthropologist in the second year of a postdoctoral fellowship at an NGO working on rural development. Their doctoral research examined how communities in post-industrial rural areas deal with socio-economic transition and local identity. The NGO recruited Researcher 8 to apply ethnographic methods in their participatory housing planning with villages experiencing population decline. This work supports residents in shaping decisions about housing renovation, land use and the future of empty buildings in their village. Progress was slower than anticipated, as building trust required more time than planned. A small group of community members began meeting regularly to develop proposals for the village's housing future. They used a facilitation guide that Researcher 8 developed iteratively with them. The guide is preliminary but recognised by local actors. The regional municipality has heard about the process and expressed interest in piloting the approach in two other villages. Researcher 8 is unsure whether the guide is ready to be transferred and scaled since it was specifically built with one community.

What is participatory or transdisciplinary social innovation?

This pathway enables researchers to collaborate with citizens, NGOs, municipalities, and practitioners in co-designing and implementing solutions for complex social challenges at the community level. It embeds knowledge creation within collaborative processes that bring together academic expertise with lived experience and practitioner knowledge. The approach goes beyond consultation by involving affected communities and practitioners in defining the problem, shaping the methods, and developing solutions.

The innovation here is social and local: new processes, relationships and practices developed with a specific community, neighbourhood, or population group. Accessibility, diversity, and inclusiveness matter because people need to be able to take part in ways that reflect their circumstances and experiences. Genuine co-creation requires actively including marginalised voices, accommodating different communication styles, and addressing power imbalances between professional and community participants.

Unlike [Pathway 6 — Collaborative innovations for systemic societal change](#), this pathway does not require a technological or infrastructural component, and it does not necessarily involve coordination across governance levels.

What are the valorisation outputs and impacts?

Outputs from this pathway serve communities and citizen groups working to improve local services, living conditions or participation in local decision-making; NGOs and civil society organisations developing community-based programmes or advocacy tools; municipalities and public institutions piloting and scaling participatory approaches; and policymakers seeking evidence grounded in lived experience. Examples of outputs include:

- participatory governance tools such as competency frameworks, facilitation guides, and conversation tools;
- co-designed service models reflecting diverse stakeholder input and community needs;
- evaluation frameworks enabling systematic assessment of participatory processes;
- policy recommendations grounded in lived experience and practitioner knowledge;
- communities of practice — sustainable networks for continued collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and support.

With good conditions in place, potential long-term impacts include strengthened social cohesion through inclusive processes; enhanced democratic legitimacy of policies and services; empowerment of underrepresented groups; and wider use of participatory approaches in governance and public service design.

Is your research a good fit?

This pathway suits researchers who work directly with communities, practitioners, or public authorities to develop practical responses to social challenges. Researchers contribute methodological expertise and analytical frameworks, whilst partners bring lived experience, practical knowledge, and capacity to test or implement solutions. Research fits well if it:

- addresses challenges that benefit from involving affected communities or practitioners from the outset to co-design solutions;
- has identified partners such as NGOs, municipalities, community groups that are willing to invest time and share decision-making;
- produces outputs intended for practical use such as tools, service models, guidelines or participatory methods.

If your work centres on building digital platforms for community use rather than participatory co-design processes, see [Pathway 2 — Digital platforms for sustained community use](#). If your work involves systemic transformation across multiple sectors and governance levels rather than community-level participatory work, see [Pathway 6 — Collaborative innovations for systemic societal change](#).

Who are the key contributors?

Besides the core ecosystem actors, described in the introduction, the following stakeholders can be specifically relevant when pursuing this pathway:

- Civil society organisations can be co-designers and help researchers work with communities through trusted relationships, local knowledge, and practical experience in implementing programmes. They can also help keep tools, methods, or services in use after the project ends. In return, they gain research-informed approaches, stronger

evidence for their work and participatory methods they can use with the communities they support.

- Public sector partners such as municipalities, local health or social services, and regional authorities provide settings to test participatory approaches and help embed them in policies and services. In return, they gain evidence-based ways to involve residents and service users in decisions.

An important caveat applies: the relevant community is not always tied to a specific place. It may be a dispersed population group, or a community defined by a shared issue. In these cases, the public sector or civil society partner may be thematic rather than local, for example a national migrant integration service or a health agency working on rare diseases.

Researcher 8's story shows that outputs in participatory or transdisciplinary social innovation are often rooted in relationships, trust and local context requiring responsible adaptation rather than simple replication. The next step for researcher 8 is to document how the guide was developed, what forms of facilitation were needed, and which local conditions shaped its use. This should be paired with a structured conversation with the municipality about what a pilot in two other villages would require, including time for trust-building, local facilitation capacity and community ownership. The aim is less about confirming that the guide is ready to scale, and more about testing whether it can be adapted responsibly in new settings before the fellowship ends.

Examples of projects that fall into this pathway:

Example 1: Competency frameworks for inclusive urban co-creation

Researchers collaborating with municipalities in several different cities developed practical competency frameworks to support more effective co-creation between municipal officials, design professionals, and residents. The frameworks addressed a common challenge in urban participation: residents are often asked to engage with technical language and institutional timelines that can make participation difficult. Outputs included facilitation guidance for professionals, practical tools for residents to develop and articulate their own positions before entering joint discussions, and protocols helping municipalities build flexibility into participation timelines and expected outputs. The tools were tested and refined iteratively with all three groups across different city contexts. The resulting resources can be adapted by municipalities for their own co-creation processes and used beyond the original project.

Example 2: Mentoring migrants – from assumed needs to participant priorities

Researchers worked with organisations providing mentoring support to young migrants and their families. Existing programmes often focused on employment and language learning, but an advisory group of young migrants helped reorient the project toward the issues that mattered most to families — including family reunification, mental health support, and managing experiences of racism. The advisory group also informed the research approach, recommending peer-led interviews in community settings to make participation more accessible and trusted. The resulting resources included mentoring guidance grounded in migrants' lived experience, training materials for young migrants participating in and leading peer interviews, and recommendations for mentoring organisations on how to centre programmes on participants' self-identified needs rather than institutional assumptions.

What actions can be taken?

Actors at the micro level	1. When designing research activities, engage with communities and partners to identify and integrate their needs. Establish governance structures to agree on roles and decision-making processes collaboratively, so that communities shape the methodology, rather than just validating it. 2. Design explicitly for accessibility and diversity by identifying barriers to participation early and addressing them before fieldwork begins. 3. Plan for post-project sustainability from the start by helping partners develop the skills, resources and structures needed to continue the work. 4. Document the contextual and relational conditions under which participatory tools were developed and worked, so they can be adapted to other contexts rather than just replicated as templates.
Actors at the meso level	1. Recognise community engagement in researcher career advancement and workload allocation, including the time needed to build trust, co-design research and support uptake. 2. Maintain institutional relationships with municipalities and NGOs as partners across projects, so trust built by one researcher can be inherited by the next. 3. Provide physical spaces for community engagement and legal support for co-owned outputs and partnership agreements.

Pathway 9 - Societal value through culture and creativity



A researcher's story: from cultural archive to digital storytelling

Researcher 9 is an art historian based at a regional museum, who has spent three years documenting the everyday life, traditions and physical traces of communities shaped by the region's coal mining past. The resulting archive consists of photographs, objects, architectural remnants and recorded personal accounts of people's memories and experiences, captured through interview videos. It was expected to become a museum exhibition. Instead, Researcher 9 proposed an experimental public event — a one-night performative evening combining interview recordings with live narration by a theatre company. The museum agreed and members of communities affected by the region's transition participated. The response highlighted how strongly audiences connected with the material in this format. Several attendees described the evening as the first time their experiences had been recognised and presented in a public setting. A data journalist who attended has suggested working together to turn the archive into a digital storytelling project combining data, images and personal stories that could be shared beyond the museum. The museum director is supportive, but the museum cannot fund a larger production on its own and suggests involving the regional cultural authority. Researcher 9 now has interest from the public as well as an external collaborator but needs a partnership or resources to develop the work further.

What is societal value through culture and creativity?

This pathway enables researchers to generate new cultural value, critical perspectives, and public engagement through arts, media as well as creative and cultural industries. Research can provide themes, evidence, archives, or interpretation that are developed into exhibitions, performances, films, digital platforms or other formats that audiences can experience directly. SSH insights can help understand target audiences and how people engage with cultural phenomena, social issues, places and histories. Many outputs are multidisciplinary: digital exhibitions, data storytelling, immersive media or interactive tools often require collaboration between researchers, creative professionals, engineers, designers, data specialists or other technical experts. The pathway therefore depends on bringing research, creative practice and technical expertise together from an early stage.

Early prototyping is critical for success: sketches, mock-ups, or small test performances can help assess whether the chosen format communicates the research clearly and engages the intended audience before investing in full production. Active involvement of creative and media professionals from this early stage is important, so the research can be shaped towards a corresponding cultural form from the start.

What are the valorisation outputs and impacts?

Outputs from this pathway serve citizens seeking to understand complex social, cultural or historical issues; educators developing curricula and learning resources; policymakers interested in how communities understand and respond to policies; journalists needing expert sources and fact-checking support; civil society organisations advocating for underrepresented perspectives; public institutions seeking to engage communities more effectively as well as informal communities such as book clubs, online forums, local civic groups engaging with social questions. Examples of outputs include:

- digital and immersive formats such as virtual or augmented reality (VR/AR) experiences that can help make cultural heritage more accessible;
- cultural archives and documentation systems preserving tangible and intangible heritage;
- cultural festivals, public events, and performances translating research into embodied, experiential formats;
- new media and data storytelling outputs such as interactive installations, digital narratives, documentary formats or story-driven data visualisations that can present research in engaging ways;
- upskilling and lifelong learning resources developed through cultural and creative partnerships.

With good conditions in place, potential long-term impacts include enhanced cultural participation, including for audiences that are harder to reach; better access to tangible and intangible heritage for future generations; shifts in public perception and better understanding of complex social issues; and economic contribution through creative industries and cultural tourism.

Is your research a good fit?

Researchers from different disciplines can contribute and co-create in this pathway by combining cultural interpretation, creative practice and technical expertise. The research fits well if it:

- studies material such as cultural heritage, archives, artistic practice, creative forms that can be curated and prepared for public engagement beyond academia;
- involves understanding how people engage with cultural issues, histories, places or creative practices as audiences, participants, or creative practitioners;
- produces interpretive or narrative knowledge that can be translated into experiential formats such as performance, exhibition, digital media, or data storytelling.

If your work involves cultural knowledge as the basis for a commercial or civic venture, see [Pathway 3 — Entrepreneurship and social innovation ventures](#).

Who are the key contributors?

Besides the core ecosystem actors, described in the introduction, the following stakeholders can be specifically relevant when pursuing this pathway:

- Cultural institutions such as museums, heritage sites, archives can provide researchers with curatorial expertise, audience knowledge and exhibition settings. In return, they gain research-based content, interpretation, and new formats for public engagement.
- Creative industry SMEs can bring technical and creative production capacity to translate research outputs into digital, immersive, or interactive formats. In return, they gain distinctive content, new ideas to develop their products, and opportunities to collaborate on innovative projects.
- Ministries of culture and regional authorities can provide funding, policy support and links to regional cultural programmes and local development priorities, while supporting projects that strengthen cultural participation, heritage access and regional cultural activity.
- Cultural managers can help connect research-based cultural work to suitable venues, formats and audiences, while benefitting from distinctive cultural content and evidence-informed projects for their programmes.
- Performing arts organisations and artists such as theatre companies, dance ensembles, musicians, performance artists can help turn complex ideas into embodied, experiential formats that reach audiences who would not engage with written research outputs. In return, they gain research-based material, new creative partnerships, and opportunities to reach wider audiences.

Researcher 9's story shows that valorisation through culture and creativity often starts by testing how different formats resonate with audiences, then using that evidence to build the partnerships and resources needed for further creative work. The most immediate next step is for researcher 9 and the journalist to define their collaboration and jointly prepare a short proposal for the regional cultural authority to request co-funding, outlining what the public event showed and how a wider digital storytelling project would build on existing cultural activity and local engagement to give communities a stronger voice and wider visibility. The first event provides evidence and momentum, but further steps are needed to build a sustainable path for cultural production and to continue developing the research through new formats, collaborations, and audiences.

Examples of projects that fall into this pathway:

Example 1: Virtual heritage access – combining technical design and cultural interpretation

Researchers worked with museums to create virtual reality experiences for regional heritage. Early prototypes focused on visual detail, but museum curators found that visitors needed more historical context and interpretation to understand the heritage material. Resolving this required restructuring the collaboration so that curators were involved earlier in design decisions rather than consulted at the end. Some technically advanced features were simplified for clearer storytelling and visitor guidance. The case illustrates an important design principle in this pathway: creative and technical choices need to support the cultural content and its intended audience experience, not the other way around.

Example 2: Immersive audio heritage – designing for different audience experiences

A project team developed 3D immersive audio technology, recording the sound of public squares to capture them as a form of intangible heritage. Early recordings focused on picturesque historical squares that the team identified as culturally significant. However, testing with people with disabilities and migrants revealed that public spaces are not experienced in the same way by everyone. Some places were linked to feelings of exclusion or insecurity, which

made it important for users to have more control over which recordings they accessed and how they engaged with them. The project was restructured to include content selection features and audio collections co-designed with different user groups. The case highlights a key consideration in this pathway: research-based cultural formats need to be tested with diverse audiences early, so that content, access and user experience can be shaped before full production.

What actions can be taken?

Actors at the micro level	1. Identify the cultural and creative potential of your research by mapping key findings to suitable formats and target audiences. 2. Test simple early versions before committing to full production and involve creative and media professionals from this stage. 3. Approach cultural institutions, performing arts organisations and media early to understand their priorities, audiences, and programming needs.
Actors at the meso level	1. Strengthen digital humanities centres or cultural innovation hubs that can help researchers identify and develop the cultural valorisation potential in their work. 2. Create and maintain partnership agreements with museums, heritage sites, performing arts organisations and festivals, and provide support to test cultural outputs with audiences. 3. Facilitate exchange arrangements with organisations specialising in digital heritage, creative industries, and performative arts, so researchers can connect with relevant expertise and partners.

Pathway 10 - Public discourse and informed citizenship



A researcher's story: finding a balance between the missions of universities

Researcher 10 is a postdoctoral sociologist whose work focuses on housing inequality in cities. The research examines how access to stable and affordable housing affects education, employment, health and family stability over time, and how recent policy changes negatively affect low-income households. The work is well-evidenced, and the findings challenge common assumptions in the current public debate about the policy changes. Researcher 10 has not planned a public engagement strategy, but a journalist at a national newspaper who covers housing policy has asked them to contribute to an ongoing monthly series. The journalist is looking for expert input that can contextualise current developments. Other openings have also emerged: an adult education network running discussion groups has asked researcher 10 to prepare a reading guide to inform their discussion groups, and a fact-checking organisation has expressed interest in their expertise. These opportunities could help the research reach different public audiences, but they were not in the project plan and are not supported by dedicated resources. Researcher 10 has a teaching-focused early-career position with no time formally allocated for public engagement. They now need to decide which route is realistic, useful and sustainable.

What is public discourse and informed citizenship?

This pathway helps researchers bring evidence and context into public debates. Research findings are made accessible to non-specialist audiences and connected to questions that are discussed in society, media or civic life. Public audiences are usually reached through specific channels such as journalists, educators, civic organisations or across various narrative formats like video or podcast. The researcher's role is to explain evidence, clarify what it does or does not support, and communicate complex ideas in ways that are accurate, understandable, and relevant to public debates.

What are the valorisation outputs and impacts?

Outputs from this pathway serve citizens and stakeholders seeking to understand complex issues. Examples of outputs include:

- media engagement through documentaries, podcasts, or social media outreach programmes;
- public debates, citizen assemblies, or community dialogues on complex policy issues;

- resources for educators or communities outside formal educational settings such as discussion guides, toolkits, accessible evidence summaries;
- fact-checking and evidence toolkits supporting balanced and informed debate.

Long-term impacts depend on sustained public engagement across researchers and over time. They include a stronger public capacity to engage with complex questions and wider access to reliable evidence for more informed public debate. This can support a public sphere where nuance is possible, misinformation is easier to challenge, and polarisation is reduced by enabling more constructive engagement across differing views.

Is your research a good fit?

Research from any discipline can contribute to this pathway when it helps public audiences understand complex or contested issues. SSH insight is particularly relevant where public engagement depends on how societies construct meaning, how public opinion forms and shifts, how democratic deliberation functions, and how citizens engage with complex information. This expertise can help to address ethical questions, identify sources of misunderstanding, and design communication strategies that respect diverse perspectives whilst maintaining evidence-based foundations.

The research fits well if it:

- provides evidence that can be linked to issues of public concern or democratic importance;
- offers conceptual clarity, context or comparative perspective that helps audiences make sense of contested or complex questions;
- relates to topics of current public debates or topics that are likely to gain public attention such as legislation, anniversaries, cultural events or crises.

If your aim is to develop competencies in an identifiable professional community, see [Pathway 5 — Human capital and organisational capacity building](#). If your aim is to inform specific policy decisions by policymakers, see [Pathway 7 — Evidence-informed policy advancement](#).

Who are the key contributors?

Besides the core ecosystem actors, described in the introduction, the following stakeholders can be specifically relevant when pursuing this pathway:

- Media partners such as public broadcasters, journalists, and fact-checking organisations can help researchers reach wider audiences through interviews, articles, documentaries, or podcasts. In return, they gain access to evidence, expert interpretation and research-based context for public issues when collaborating with researchers.
- Educators and learning organisations, including teachers, librarians, museums, adult education networks, and youth workers can help adapt research for learning settings, workshops, or public programmes. They benefit from reliable, research-based content, discussion materials and expert input for education and civic learning.
- Civil society organisations, campaign networks and publishers can connect research to public debates and communities, whilst they can gain research-based evidence and accessible content for advocacy and public engagement.

Researcher 10's situation illustrates that public engagement can develop through different routes, requiring considered choices about formats, time and audiences.

Researcher 10 seeks advice from the science communication expert at their research institute to help prioritise and structure the public engagement activities. Because the newspaper contribution has a clear format, established audience and the potential to become a sustained media partnership, they prioritise it as the most immediate next step. Researcher 10 could use the first pieces to test whether their evidence can be communicated clearly and whether the collaboration is manageable alongside teaching duties. The reading guide and fact-checking work could then be developed by reusing material from the newspaper contributions, rather than becoming separate workstreams. With guidance from the science communication expert, researcher 10 can re-negotiate their contract to formally recognise their public engagement and allocate dedicated time that can be combined with teaching.

Examples of projects that fall into this pathway:

Example 1: Migration discourse intervention – supporting informed public discussion

Political scientists partnered with public broadcasters and civil society organisations to support more informed and constructive public discussion on migration, asylum, and integration. The project applied discourse analysis that identified common misconceptions and engaged focus groups that explored citizens' concerns. They produced a documentary series, fact-checking resources, and facilitated community dialogues. The dialogues enabled participants to explore economic, cultural and identity-related concerns, rather than focussing only on correcting inaccurate claims and misconceptions. Pre- and post-engagement surveys demonstrated increased understanding of asylum processes, migration policy and integration challenges. The case illustrates how research can move beyond information provision toward building citizens' capacity for nuanced deliberation on contested issues.

Example 2: Countering disinformation - building new relations across media and civil society

A consortium brought together researchers of communication and philosophy, political scientists as well as private technology partners to strengthen citizens' capacity to identify and respond to disinformation during a period shaped by geopolitical tensions and a pandemic. The project developed analytics tools, produced open educational resources on media literacy, and ran training workshops with journalists, fact-checkers, NGOs, and public authorities. The consortium worked in a setting where support structures for valorisation were still emerging, and resources were limited. This meant that the consortium had to independently build relations and coordinate with stakeholders alongside developing the tools and capacity-building.

What actions can be taken?

Actors at the micro level	1. Identify and build relationships with communication partners relevant to your research such as broadcasters, journalists, educators, fact-checking organisations, or civil society groups. 2. Develop skills in science communication, writing for public audiences, media engagement, and facilitating public discussions. 3. Stay updated with public debates, policy processes and events in your field, so you can contribute evidence when your expertise is most relevant. 4. Document public engagement and its impact, for example through audience feedback, media reach, or follow-up requests for career recognition.
Actors at the meso level	1. Strengthen institutional capacity for public engagement with dedicated roles for press and media liaison that can advise researchers and connect them to broadcasters, journalists, and fact-checking organisations. 2. Provide training and mentorship in science communication at all career stages and recognise public engagement in promotion criteria alongside academic publications. 3. Build institutional partnerships with educational publishers, public broadcasters and adult education networks, so that research can be adapted for use in education, media and public discussion, reaching beyond academic settings.

Annex I: Results-based decision tree

Step 2: Who are your partners / target audience?

Technology assessments and innovation tools

Technology assessments and innovation tools			
Tech industry and innovation ecosystems	Citizens and affected communities	Citizens and public sector (digital governance)	Cross-sector partnerships
▼	▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 1	Click here to go to Pathway 1	Click here to go to Pathway 2	Click here to go to Pathway 6
Human-centred technology solutions	Human-centred technology solutions	Digital platforms for sustained community use	Collaborative innovations for systemic societal change

Step 2: Who are your partners / target audience?

Evidence and policy briefs

Evidence and policy briefs		
Multi-stakeholder consortia	Policymakers and government agencies	General public and civil society organisations
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 6	Click here to go to Pathway 7	Click here to go to Pathway 10
Collaborative innovations for systemic societal change	Evidence-informed policy advancement	Public discourse and informed citizenship

Step 2: Who are your partners / target audience?

Practical tools and toolkits

Practical tools and toolkits		
Social entrepreneurs and impact investors	Business and industry leaders	HR and training organisations
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 3	Click here to go to Pathway 4	Click here to go to Pathway 5
Entrepreneurship and social innovation ventures	Organisational transformation	Human capital and organisational capacity building

Step 2: Who are your partners / target audience?

Platforms and digital infrastructure

Platforms and digital infrastructure		
Citizens and local communities	Public authorities and NGOs	Cross-sectoral partnerships
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 8	Click here to go to Pathway 9	Click here to go to Pathway 9
Participatory or transdisciplinary social innovation	Societal value through culture and creativity	Societal value through culture and creativity

Step 2: Who are your partners / target audience?

Cultural and creative outputs

Cultural and creative outputs		
Citizens and local communities	Cultural institutions and creative industries	Education providers
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 9	Click here to go to Pathway 9	Click here to go to Pathway 10
Societal value through culture and creativity	Societal value through culture and creativity	Public discourse and informed citizenship

Annex II: Impact-based decision tree

Step 2: Who are your partners / target audience?

Social and community partners/target audience

Social and community partners/target audience					
Community organisations and NGOs such as voluntary sector bodies, neighbourhood groups, advocacy organisations, and social sector providers	Local government and municipalities such as local authorities, city planners, public health departments, and community development officers	Healthcare and social care providers such as public health bodies, social care teams, mental health services, and community health workers	Citizens and vulnerable or marginalised groups such as at-risk communities, disability groups, migrants, and disadvantaged households	Education providers such as schools, colleges, youth organisations, adult learning providers, and community education centres	Cross-sectoral partnerships and civil society networks such as community consortia, inter-agency partnerships, civic coalitions, and social sector alliances
Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select

If it is too early to say, have a look at [Pathway 5](#), [Pathway 6](#) and [Pathway 8](#) for inspiration.

Step 2: Who are your partners / target audience?

Economic and market partners/target audience

Economic and market partners/target audience					
Technology companies and R&D departments such as product managers, engineering teams, innovation/R&D teams, compliance officers	Business leadership and industrial firms such as senior executives, HR professionals, compliance teams, trade unions	Social enterprises and impact investors such as social enterprise founders, incubators, impact investors, and community partners	Digital platform operators and developers such as software developers, cultural sector innovators, AI system designers, and public sector clients	Training and skills development organisations such as HR departments, educational institutions, business leaders, and skills development providers	Workers, consumers and affected households such as a beneficiary group
Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select

If it is too early to say, have a look at [Pathway 1](#), [Pathway 2](#), [Pathway 4](#) and [Pathway 5](#) for inspiration.

Step 2: Who are your partners / target audience?

Political and governance partners/target audience

Political and governance partners/target audience		
Government agencies and policymakers such as civil service departments, regulatory bodies, legislative committees, and policy think tanks	Multi-stakeholder partnerships and NGOs such as public authorities, civil society organisations, community leaders, and grassroots organisations	Cross-sectoral innovation consortia such as industry associations, innovation consortia, partnership networks, and affected communities
Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select

If it is too early to say, have a look at [Pathway 1](#), [Pathway 2](#), [Pathway 6](#) and [Pathway 8](#) for inspiration.

Step 2: Who are your partners / target audience?

Cultural, educational and civic partners/target audience

Cultural, educational and civic partners/target audience			
Cultural institutions and creative industries such as museums, heritage sites, creative sectors, artists, and cultural workers	Media and public engagement platforms such as media organisations, science communicators, education providers, and public outreach teams	Digital platform operators and developers such as software developers, cultural sector innovators, AI system designers, and public sector clients	Citizens and community groups such as the general public, vulnerable or marginalised groups, community organisations, and education providers
Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select

If it is too early to say, have a look at [Pathway 8](#), [Pathway 9](#) and [Pathway 10](#) for inspiration.

Step 2: Who are your partners / target audience?

Environmental and sustainability partners/target audience

Environmental and sustainability partners/target audience					
Technology companies and R&D departments such as clean tech developers, environmental tech firms, and sustainability innovation teams	Business leadership and industrial firms such as sustainability managers, corporate governance teams, and supply chain officers	Social enterprises and impact investors such as green social entrepreneurs, environmental impact investors, and community energy cooperatives	Digital platform operators and developers such as environmental data platforms, sustainability tech firms, and open data providers	Training and skills development organisations such as green skills providers, environmental education bodies, and professional development organisations	Workers, consumers and affected households such as communities in transition sectors, climate-impacted households, and workers in fossil fuel industries
Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select	Click here to select

If it is too early to say, have a look at [Pathway 1](#), [Pathway 3](#), [Pathway 6](#) and [Pathway 8](#) for inspiration.

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Social and community output: Community organisations and NGOs

Community organisations and NGOs		
Community needs assessments or engagement	Participatory governance tools or facilitation guides	Co-designed community solutions or service models
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 6	Click here to go to Pathway 8	Click here to go to Pathway 8
Participatory or transdisciplinary social innovation	Participatory or transdisciplinary social innovation	Participatory or transdisciplinary social innovation

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Social and community output: Local government and municipalities

Local government and municipalities		
Policy recommendations for local governance or service delivery	Community co-design frameworks or participatory planning tools	Systemic change models for urban or regional transitions
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 7	Click here to go to Pathway 8	Click here to go to Pathway 6
Evidence-informed policy advancement	Participatory or transdisciplinary social innovation	Collaborative innovations for systemic societal change

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Social and community output: Healthcare and social care providers

Healthcare and social care providers		
Evidence-based service models or clinical / social guidelines	Training and professional development	Health and wellbeing assessment frameworks
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 6	Click here to go to Pathway 5	Click here to go to Pathway 8
Collaborative innovations for systemic societal change	Human capital and organisational capacity building	Participatory or transdisciplinary social innovation

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Social and community output: Citizens and vulnerable or marginalised groups

Citizens and vulnerable or marginalised groups		
Inclusive service designs or accessibility tools	Public education or awareness materials	Community empowerment or advocacy resources
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 8	Click here to go to Pathway 9	Click here to go to Pathway 10
Participatory or transdisciplinary social innovation	Societal value through culture and creativity	Public discourse and informed citizenship

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Social and community output: Education providers

Education providers		
Training curricula or educational resources	Capacity-building tools or professional development	Participatory learning or assessment methodologies
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 5	Click here to go to Pathway 5	Click here to go to Pathway 8
Human capital and organisational capacity building	Human capital and organisational capacity building	Participatory or transdisciplinary social innovation

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Social and community output: Cross-sectoral partnerships & civil society networks

Cross-sectoral partnerships & civil society networks		
Replicable models for social systems change	Multi-stakeholder governance or coordination	Social impact evaluation or monitoring tools
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 6	Click here to go to Pathway 6	Click here to go to Pathway 8
Collaborative innovations for systemic societal change	Collaborative innovations for systemic societal change	Participatory or transdisciplinary social innovation

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Economic and market output: Technology companies and R&D departments

Technology companies and R&D departments		
Prototypes or demonstrators	Ethical guidelines or standards for responsible innovation	Data platforms, dashboards, AI tools, predictive or decision-support systems, and open datasets
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 1	Click here to go to Pathway 1	Click here to go to Pathway 2
Human-centred technology solutions	Human-centred technology solutions	Digital platforms for sustained community use

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Economic and market output: Business leadership and industrial firms

Business leadership and industrial firms		
Organisational models or compliance toolkits	Governance frameworks	Training programmes, modules and leadership development, change-management methodologies, decision-support tools
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 4	Click here to go to Pathway 4	Click here to go to Pathway 5
Organisational transformation	Organisational transformation	Human capital and organisational capacity building

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Economic and market output: Social enterprises and impact investors

Social enterprises and impact investors		
Business models or impact analyses	Networks for social entrepreneurs	Community engagement protocols
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 3	Click here to go to Pathway 3	Click here to go to Pathway 3
Entrepreneurship and social innovation ventures	Entrepreneurship and social innovation ventures	Entrepreneurship and social innovation ventures

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Economic and market output: Digital platform operators and developers

Digital platform operators and developers		
Open access databases, platforms or dashboards with standardised metadata	Integrated data or decision-support platforms combining social with administrative or technical data	Community governance and engagement mechanisms for sustained platform use
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 2	Click here to go to Pathway 2	Click here to go to Pathway 2
Digital platforms for sustained community use	Digital platforms for sustained community use	Digital platforms for sustained community use

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Economic and market output: Training and skills development organisations

Training and skills development organisations		
Training programmes, curricula and educational materials	Online learning platforms and tools integrating behavioural insights	Practitioner guidance and facilitation methodologies for capacity building
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 5	Click here to go to Pathway 5	Click here to go to Pathway 5
Human capital and organisational capacity building	Human capital and organisational capacity building	Human capital and organisational capacity building

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Economic and market output: Workers, consumers and affected households

Workers, consumers and affected households		
Consumer rights frameworks or market protection tools	Employment or labour market transition analyses	Behavioural insights or social safety net guidance
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 3	Click here to go to Pathway 4	Click here to go to Pathway 5
Entrepreneurship and social innovation ventures	Organisational transformation	Human capital and organisational capacity building

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Political and governance output: Government agencies and policymakers

Government agencies and policymakers		
Evidence syntheses, policy briefs or rapid reviews	Ethical guidelines or standards for responsible innovation	Strategic roadmaps or multi-actor coordination frameworks
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 7	Click here to go to Pathway 7	Click here to go to Pathway 6
Evidence-informed policy advancement	Evidence-informed policy advancement	Collaborative innovations for systemic societal change

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Political and governance output: Multi-stakeholder partnerships and NGOs, and cross-sectoral innovation consortia

Multi-stakeholder partnerships, NGOs and cross-sectoral innovation consortia	
Stakeholder engagement frameworks; co-designed solutions & participatory toolkits; evaluation of participatory processes	Cross-sector partnerships; implementation manuals & user guides; replicable operational models (climate, health, mobility)
▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 8	Click here to go to Pathway 6
Participatory or transdisciplinary social innovation	Collaborative innovations for systemic societal change

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Political and governance output: Cross-sectoral innovation consortia

Multi-stakeholder partnerships, NGOs and cross-sectoral innovation consortia	
Stakeholder engagement frameworks; co-designed solutions & participatory toolkits; evaluation of participatory processes	Cross-sector partnerships; implementation manuals & user guides; replicable operational models (climate, health, mobility)
▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 8	Click here to go to Pathway 6
Participatory or transdisciplinary social innovation	Collaborative innovations for systemic societal change

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Cultural, educational and civic output: Cultural institutions, creative industries and media / public-engagement platforms

Cultural institutions, creative industries and media / public-engagement platforms	
Artistic or cultural works and exhibitions; platforms for cultural engagement; audience development strategies	Media campaigns or documentaries; public debates or citizen assemblies; fact-check resources or toolkits
▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 9	Click here to go to Pathway 10
Societal value through culture and creativity	Public discourse and informed citizenship

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Cultural, educational and civic output: Media and public engagement platforms

Media and public engagement platforms		
Media campaigns or documentaries	Public debates or citizen assemblies	Fact-check resources or toolkits
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 10	Click here to go to Pathway 10	Click here to go to Pathway 10
Public discourse and informed citizenship	Public discourse and informed citizenship	Public discourse and informed citizenship

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Cultural, educational and civic output: Digital platform operators and developers

Digital platform operators and developers		
Digital heritage platforms or civic engagement tools	Open datasets or digital archives for cultural institutions	Decision-support systems for cultural policy or governance
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 2	Click here to go to Pathway 9	Click here to go to Pathway 10
Digital platforms for sustained community use	Societal value through culture and creativity	Public discourse and informed citizenship

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Cultural, educational and civic output: Citizens and community groups

Citizens and community groups		
Public education resources or digital learning materials	Community or cultural engagement programmes	Public outreach toolkits or co-designed community solutions
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 5	Click here to go to Pathway 9	Click here to go to Pathway 10
Human capital and organisational capacity building	Societal value through culture and creativity	Public discourse and informed citizenship

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Environmental and sustainability output: Technology companies and R&D departments

Technology companies and R&D departments		
Clean technology prototypes or sustainability guidelines	Digital environmental monitoring tools or platforms	Technology adoption strategies for sustainable innovation
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 1	Click here to go to Pathway 2	Click here to go to Pathway 6
Human-centred technology solutions	Digital platforms for sustained community use	Collaborative innovations for systemic societal change

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Environmental and sustainability output: Business leadership and industrial firms

Business leadership and industrial firms		
Sustainability transition frameworks and business models	Corporate governance tools for environmental compliance	Change management methodologies for green transition
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 4	Click here to go to Pathway 6	Click here to go to Pathway 3
Organisational transformation	Collaborative innovations for systemic societal change	Entrepreneurship and social innovation ventures

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Environmental and sustainability output: Social enterprises and impact investors

Social enterprises and impact investors		
Green social enterprise models or environmental impact analyses	Environmental impact investment protocols or due-diligence tools	Community-based sustainability venture frameworks
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 3	Click here to go to Pathway 6	Click here to go to Pathway 8
Entrepreneurship and social innovation ventures	Collaborative innovations for systemic societal change	Participatory or transdisciplinary social innovation

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Environmental and sustainability output: Digital platform operators and developers

Digital platform operators and developers		
Environmental data platforms & sustainability dashboards	Open datasets for climate & ecological monitoring	Decision-support systems for environmental governance
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 2	Click here to go to Pathway 2	Click here to go to Pathway 6
Digital platforms for sustained community use	Digital platforms for sustained community use	Collaborative innovations for systemic societal change

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Environmental and sustainability output: Training and skills development organisations

Training and skills development organisations		
Green skills curricula or training programmes	Capacity-building tools for sustainable transitions	Professional development resources for environmental practitioners
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 5	Click here to go to Pathway 5	Click here to go to Pathway 6
Human capital and organisational capacity building	Human capital and organisational capacity building	Collaborative innovations for systemic societal change

Step 3: What kind of research outputs do you plan to develop?

Environmental and sustainability output: **Workers, consumers and affected households**

Workers, consumers and affected households		
Consumer information frameworks for sustainable choices	Employment transition support models for affected groups	Community resilience tools or just transition guidance
▼	▼	▼
Click here to go to Pathway 3	Click here to go to Pathway 5	Click here to go to Pathway 8
Entrepreneurship and social innovation ventures	Human capital and organisational capacity building	Participatory or transdisciplinary social innovation

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Multidisciplinary research – including Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) – offers valuable solutions for addressing Europe's societal challenges and reinforcing its competitiveness. However, its potential is not always translated into broader societal, economic, and political value, and uptake needs to be accelerated. This practical guidance offers ten valorisation pathways specifically developed for multidisciplinary research, drawing on successful examples of existing practices. The pathways are practical tools for inspiration to help researchers discover and pursue possible routes towards impact and increase the valorisation of multidisciplinary research and innovation results in line with the ERA Policy Agenda 2025–2027.

Studies and reports

