

BioData.pt Workshop: *Assessing the Impact of Research Activities* (Online) - Pilot Edition

Summary

On the 1st of October 2020, ELIXIR Portugal prompted a pilot edition of the **BioData.pt Workshop: *Assessing the Impact of Research Activities*** as a 5-hours event, counting with the collaboration of ELIXIR Greece, and delivered to 13 guest-experts, from National and International R&I organizations, whose main goal was to provide us with feedback to refine this event. Due to COVID-19 pandemic this workshop was developed recurring to a distance learning paradigm and delivered remotely.

Methodology and structure

The workshop, delivered via the Zoom platform, featured two introductory lectures on scientific and socio-economic impact assessment, followed by a hands-on group exercise with the objective of assessing the socio-economic impact of activities from a mock project. For the later, participants were divided into small groups, assigned to Zoom breakout rooms, to fill in a virtual Canvas simulated in Google Slides based on which the main conclusions of the assessed project were presented and discussed by the audience. Finally a showcase of a project whose impact was previously assessed using this methodology was presented.

The number of participants, 13, fall within the adequate range of participants for a remote participatory event that, in our opinion, should remain between 12 and 16 people. Four facilitators were available in the session.

Feedback

10 out of 13 participants (6 females and 4 males) completed the Feedback Questionnaire, determinant for the intended evaluation and refinement of the workshop.

Eighty percent of participants rated the overall quality of the course and materials as very good or excellent. The scores attributed to the different parts and materials of the workshop (**Figures 1 and 2**), corroborate the overall assessment and permit a zoom into the details that can be further worked.



Figure 1: Feedback of different parts of the workshop.

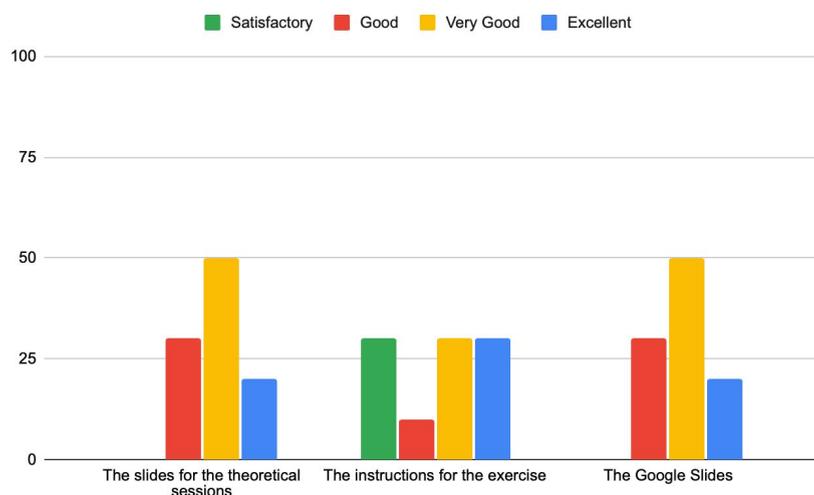


Figure 2: Feedback regarding the several materials of the workshop.

If the theoretical parts and materials were generally very well evaluated, the scores attributed to the exercise and its supporting materials indicate that these need to be improved.

The logistics of the workshop was also assessed by participants (**Figure 3**). Although 80% of the participants considered that the organization was very good or excellent, the methodology and logistics of the theoretical sessions and the practical exercises did not perform so well. It is likely due to the distance learning constraints, and we need to consider if there are better options or if we already reached the limit of capacity of available tools. It is noteworthy that the interaction with the teaching staff was well rated, which is another aspect involving greater complexity when moving to the virtual environment.

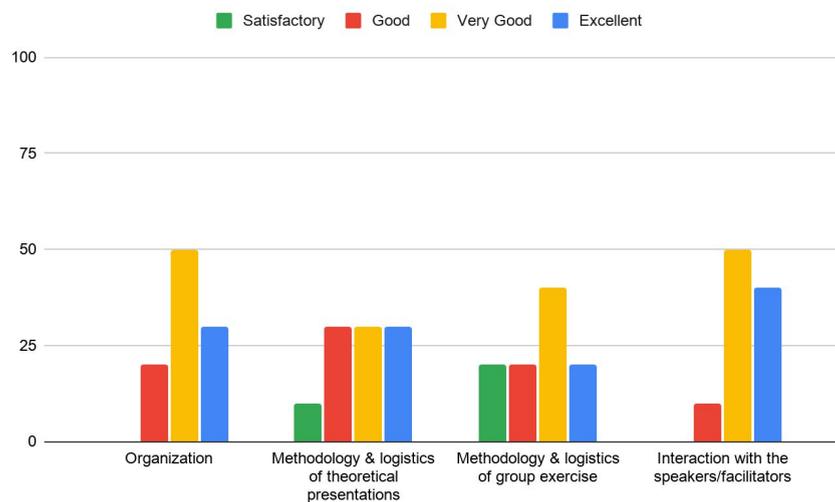


Figure 3: Feedback on the logistic aspects of the workshop.

Eighty percent of the participants found the overall duration of the workshop and the duration of the theoretical sessions just right. Concerning the practical exercise, participants' opinions were dispersed: 30% found that it was too short, 30% that it was too long, and only 40% found that the time dedicated to the exercise was just right. This suggests that we should rethink the duration of the exercise.

Participants indicated having acquired basic (50%) or substantial (50%) knowledge with the workshop, which is remarkable since 40% of participants consider themselves experts in impact assessment. Moreover, 80% of participants referred their intention to use the knowledge acquired in the workshop to assess the impact of their current and/or future activities.

Considerations for refining the event

The duration of the workshop needs to be pondered, maybe in function of target: Do we intend to train people that will carry out the exercise with their teams or do we provide support to people when assessing their activities?

The methods/tools used in support of talks and exercises should be assessed and improved to the limit of available capacity. Also the organizers can get more skilled in their use.

The materials supporting the practical exercise, from its presentation to filling guidelines and accessory tables of indicators should be improved and a glossary should be included.

Comments collected in the feedback

1. Logistics of the workshop: use more the chat to share the link/info needed during the presentations/surveys/exercise. The theoretical part was really good with the surveys along the way - more interactions and less exposure.
2. This was a very interesting and successful event. Even though it was delivered virtually, it maintained a high level of engagement to the participants through both the interactive exercises during the theoretical part (exercises which really helped me understand the discussed concepts), as well as the hands-on exercises in the breakout rooms.
3. I would be quite eager to reuse this material (or even host an iteration of this event) in the ELIXIR-GR node, as I strongly believe that understanding how impact works (and what it means), is crucial in all aspects of research.
 - Excellent work, and thank you very much for extending this invitation!
 - Alternative adaption of the matrix layout to facilitate use in a remote setting.
 - Very well prepared and run, I did not see the time pass. Very engaging too.

From the Chat Notes

1. We need to design our activities well, so that they lead to outcomes and then impact.
2. Example of a scientific impact pathway: Activity = write paper; Outcome: paper published; Impact = paper cited. But this pathway is not set in stone, it can be adapted.
3. Example of a policy influence example: Activity = write position paper; Outcome = Position paper is read by the EC; Impact = the EC drops the ELIXIR name in important policy documents => ELIXIR is visible ... and appreciated.
4. In the impact section of scientific proposals, it is important to write text that resonates with a scientific audience, as the evaluators tend to be scientists.

Changes to be implemented

Must be done

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Would be nice to have

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