



**Independent Evaluation of the Public Engagement with Research and  
Research Engagement with Society (PERARES) Project**

**Deliverable D9.3**

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## Executive Summary

- The Public Engagement with Research and Research Engagement with Society "PERARES" project (2010-2014) is a EU FP7 funded project that is concerned with strengthening public engagement in research (PER) through interaction in formulating research agendas between researchers and Civil Society Organisations (CSO's), at the level of research organisations (including Higher Education Institutes), and at a regional and transnational/European levels.
- To address these issues, PERARES has 26 project partners from across Europe and is divided into twelve integrated work packages.
- An independent evaluation was commissioned as part of Work Package 9 (WP), 'Monitoring and Evaluation' (Task 6) to be delivered in October 2014.
- The evaluation process was embedded within the research design from the beginning of the project and ran throughout its duration (2010-2014).
- The intention of the independent evaluation was to assess the overall quality of the work, reflect on the extent to which the project had met its objectives as defined in the description of work (DoW), ensure the appropriate and transparent use of funding, and highlight lessons learnt from the project for the future.
- The project was evaluated drawing on the evaluation criteria framework specified by Rowe and Fewer (2005).
- The evaluation was based on several sources of data including; a) participant observation at formal project consortium meetings and events b) close liaison with the project leader throughout the project c) informal discussions with project partners d) formal, semi-structured interviews with 8 project partners e) document review of PERARES progress reporting and principal work package deliverables f) review of the self-evaluations produced by work package partners and g) a final interview with the project coordinator.

- This report presents the findings of the evaluation, the evaluation is structured in relation to the eight objectives guiding the research, although first, the theoretical approach taken by the evaluation is outlined, followed by an overview of the evaluation methodology.
- Finally, the report also includes some personal reflections of both the project coordinator and the independent evaluator of the PERARES project and the process of evaluating it.
- Key findings in response to the eight guiding objectives are as follows; in relation to objective 1, the online debate platform was a novel approach trialled by the PERARES project for achieving continuous 'up-stream' engagement. PERARES has been successful in establishing this platform and testing its utility by trialling debates over the duration of the project including debates on nano-technology, domestic violence, food gardens in the city, promoting local economic development and natural resource issues across Europe.
- The development of a trans-national debate web-portal in response to objective 2 was addressed by WP2 and is one of the principle tangible outputs of the PERARES project. The mechanism managed to link up local engagement mechanisms and it is expected that the platform could be refined and used to provide a long-term approach for continuous and 'up-stream' engagement beyond the life of the PERARES project.
- Objective 3 sought to increase the number of research bodies that conduct research with CSO's. In response to this PERARES has successfully established ten new Science Shop type mechanisms across Europe (WP4). The new shops have provided stimulus at the local level for PER and have positively influenced the cultural and procedural openness to public engagement within the host institutes of the new Science Shops.
- In addressing objective 4, WP5 and WP6 have successfully established research agendas in the field of domestic violence and Roma rights in cooperation with CSO's

demonstrated effective engagement with marginalised groups. The work conducted in the area of domestic violence resulted in the development of a concise research question that developed into a comparative study between three European countries (UK, Norway and Belgium). The work on Roma issues (WP6) produced a clear code of conduct for working with Roma people and highlighted the need to incorporate participatory action research as a principle methodology for working with marginalised groups.

- A central aim of the PERARES project has been to trial novel forms of engagement with CSO's; this was highlighted by objective 5 and addressed by WP3. The scenario workshop was demonstrated to be a useful approach for moving research 'up-stream' and provided a useful forum for discussion, eliciting novel concerns and issues that might not have previously been articulated as a research concern.
- Increasing the awareness of the value of public engagement with research (PER) in higher education institutes (HEI's) was addressed by WP7 and 8 respectively, in response to objective 6. WP7 focused on sharing of good practice across Europe at the level of HEI and produced a number of valuable outputs. These included a report on the state of the art of HEI policy on community engagement, practical advice to support practitioners of community engagement in the form of a pocket guide to developing policy and strategy and a series of discussion papers that build a policy case for public engagement through the curriculum. WP8 conducted a detailed comparative study across Europe on the alternative approaches adopted by research funders.
- Sharing of best practice in Science Shop activities and to collaborate to identify bottlenecks was addressed principally by objective 7 and WP9. Formal evaluations of Science Shop activities have been undertaken in two ways, through economic evaluation and through the development of a robust self-evaluation tool. The economic evaluation demonstrated the economic efficiency of Science Shop approaches *vis-à-vis* alternative approaches. Whilst the self-evaluation tool

successfully initiated self-reflection of practice amongst project partners across the PERARES project.

- Finally, in line with the requirements of Objective 8 the findings of the PERARES project have been shared through two highly successful international conferences hosted in conjunction with the Living Knowledge network held in Bonn (2012) and Copenhagen (2014).
- The independent evaluation is intended to be interpreted as a cautious critique of the body of work conducted, it is in no way intended to apportion blame for difficulties faced during the project, but it is intended to highlight where there may have been issues and lessons learnt for the future.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## 1. Background

This report presents findings from an independent evaluation of the EU FP7-funded project *'Public Engagement with Research and Research Engagement with Society'* (PERARES). The evaluation has been conducted by Newcastle University who were commissioned to undertake the evaluation as part of Work Package 9 of the project: *'Monitoring and Evaluation'* (Task 9.6). The evaluation was integrated into the research design from the beginning of the research process and has run for the duration of the research project (2010-2014). The independent evaluation was commissioned with the intention of corroborating the quality of the work conducted as part of the PERARES project, ensuring transparency and providing justification for the use of public funds for publicly engaged research (Rowe and Frewer, 2004).

The PERARES project aims to strengthen interaction in formulating research agendas between researchers and Civil Society Organisations (CSO's), at the level of research organisations, and at regional and transnational/European levels. It is recognised that more equitable access to science and technology, and more response from science and technology towards civil society are both needed to achieve the ideal of the knowledge society, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. Therefore, PERARES aims to get a deeper and more systematic engagement of research bodies (such as universities, research funders, and Science Shops) with civil society groups and advance this by transnational exchanges of experience and mutual learning. Moreover, in order to advance genuine mutual engagement, it is necessary to consider and implement forms of dialogue between research bodies and civil society which will make a difference to research strategies and will become part of current research practices. This engagement can make civil society a partner in identifying and responding to the "grand challenges" of our time. PERARES will strengthen public engagement with research agenda-setting in the European Union by: assessing the existing scope, barriers and opportunities for public engagement with research; piloting novel forms of engagement

mechanism that combine locally based Science Shop activities with international debates; supporting and establishing new mechanisms (principally in the format of Science Shops) for public engagement in institutions with little or no prior experience of using such mechanisms, and; to provide a learning platform as well as physical mechanisms for moving public engagement in research 'upstream' in order to shape research agendas. The overall concept through which PERARES seeks to fulfil this aim is through the transnational exchanges of experience and mutual learning and cooperation among diverse participants (Universities, public and private research organisations, research mediation organisations, outreach or communication organisations, research funders and Civil Society Organisations (CSO's).

More specifically, the PERARES project has 8 main objectives:

1. Encourage a continuous "upstream" science-society dialogue by linking the Science Shop work to existing debates and dialogues, to allow these debates to move upstream, into research planning at the local/regional level.
2. Set-up a transnational debate, engaging CSO's, researchers and general public in a dialogue on research agenda's (both local/regional and transnational/European) through a web-portal and pilot this in a dialogue on nano science and technology, before opening the floor to other topics of concern to CSO's with relevance for European research.
3. Increase the number of research bodies that do research with civil society organisations, by developing local PER plans for this in ten specific regions, and by sharing information with interested parties in other regions as well
4. Set-up research agendas in the field of domestic violence and the field of Roma and Traveller's communities' issues, in direct co-operation with CSO's

5. Pilot novel forms of research co-operation with CSO's, such as continuous debates between research labs and CSO's, and analyse these (and the processes of cooperating with the CSO's mentioned under 4) to learn from these.
6. Create a higher awareness of the value of, and practical insights in, the ways that HEI's, research councils and other funders can support research with CSO's as partner, through survey and experiment
7. Advance the work of Science Shops and similar organisations by studying and sharing best practices and collaborating to find ways to tackle bottlenecks through evaluating scope, process and impact of our upstream forms of PER
8. Share and discuss our PER activities with the wider community through publicity and two international conferences

In order to address the objectives the project has 26 partners from across Europe and is divided into twelve integrated Work Packages (WP) (see Table 1). The WP's are intended to experiment with a range approaches to engaging civil society with research and in so doing exemplify what can be done and what is successful.

**Table 1: PERARES Work Packages (WP)**

<b>WP No.</b>	<b>WP Name</b>
<b>1</b>	Consortium management
<b>2</b>	Structuring public engagement through knowledge debates
<b>3</b>	Pilot for permanent debate lab-CSO
<b>4</b>	Capacity building for structuring PER through research with CSO's
<b>5</b>	Structuring PER in research on domestic violence
<b>6</b>	Structuring PER in social sciences research and forgotten citizens of Europe: local human rights
<b>7</b>	Structuring PER in Higher education through research with CSO's in curricular activities and partners
<b>8</b>	Advancing PER through support form research funders for research of CSO's with research institutes
<b>9**</b>	Monitoring and evaluation of PER through science shops and variants and knowledge debates
<b>10</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> Living knowledge conference
<b>11</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> Living knowledge conference
<b>12</b>	Dissemination

\*\*The independent evaluation is conducted as part of WP9

Although a project partner, the task of Newcastle University remains independent of the tasks of other project partners and, in particular, of the other partners in WP9 whose work concerns the devising, testing and implementation of self-evaluation procedures for the use by other project partners. This is not to say that Newcastle University has remained completely separate from the project and, indeed, has engaged convivially with project partners and shared insights where this could lead to continual improvement of the PERARES project without detracting from the requirement to remain impartial for the purposes of evaluation. Throughout the project Newcastle University has retained a close working relationship with the Project Leader, Dr Henk Mulder.

### ***1.1 The evaluation brief***

The evaluation brief as defined by WP9, Task 9.6 was broad. The purpose of this report, and the work undertaken by Newcastle University, was in the main, intended to provide an independent evaluation of the extent to which the PERARES project is fulfilling its intended objectives according to the original “Description of Work” (DoW). Where and if appropriate the evaluation was to identify gaps relating to ongoing evaluations and activities to achieve the projects objectives. The evaluation hence provided both a means of assessing the project progress and contributing to the success of the project, through close liaison with work package leaders, members of the consortium and the Project Leader throughout the process.

### ***1.2 Evaluation principles***

Just as there are uncertainties as to how best embed public engagement within research and there is no definitive framework of best practice for this, there are also uncertainties about how best to evaluate such exercises (Emery *et al.*, in review; Rowe et al., 2005; Rowe and Frewer, 2005; Rowe and Frewer, 2004; Rowe, Marsh and Frewer, 2004, Rowe and Frewer, 2000). A recognised area of debate in the area of evaluation of stakeholder engagement is whether or not it is possible to derive a generic framework for evaluation, or

whether given the diversity in aims of such exercises this is not possible. Rowe and Frewer (2000) argue that it is possible to provide a loose framework for evaluation which is based on the premise that although the aims of a particular engagement exercise may be different, the events have commonalities and it is these common goals on which the success of engagement may be measured. However, at this stage it is worth recognising that much of the literature in the field of evaluation has considered the independent evaluation process of singular stakeholder engagement exercises and thus has not considered the modes of evaluation for entire projects to this same end. Rowe and Frewer (2000) have however, provided one of the best known frameworks for conducting independent evaluations of effective public participation engagements. In so doing they recognise that often the quality of outputs from public participation exercises are difficult to measure, as a starting point they highlight the need to consider which elements of the process are desirable and then measure the presence and quality of these process aspects. In order to do this they propose a number of theoretical evaluation criteria that comprise of two main types namely; acceptance and process criteria. An acceptance criterion relates to features of the method that make it acceptable to the public and process criteria ensures that the process takes place in an effective manner. Rowe and Frewer (2000) subdivide these criteria identifying key criteria upon which a good exercise should score, Table 2 presents this criteria.

Although, it must be recognised that the criteria outlined are Intended to guide the independence evaluation of singular public engagement events (for example, public debates and citizens juries), which was out with the remit of this individual task and, if anything, more aligned with the rest of the work being conducted as part of WP9, abstractly this framework can be used to provide a checklist for conducting robust evaluations. Additionally, Horlick-Jones *et al.*, (2006) highlight the importance of also including specific criteria relating to the individual public engagement event being analysed, again this relates to a singular engagement event, however, they highlight the importance of including the sponsor's criteria for what would make a successful event. Although, they also recognise that caution must be taken not to overly rely on this measure as this can often be vague,

and can lead to evaluations that fulfil the requirements of the organisers but that do not hold up to the scrutiny of external stakeholders.

**Table 2: Evaluation Framework**

<b>ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA</b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Criteria of representativeness	The public participation exercise should comprise a broadly representative sample of the population of the affected public
2	Criteria of independence	The participation process should be conducted in an independent, unbiased way
3	Criteria of early involvement	The public should become involved as early as possible in the process as soon as value judgements become salient
4	Criteria of influence	The output of the procedure should have a genuine impact upon policy
5	Criterion of transparency	The process should be transparent so that the public can see what is going on and how decisions are being made
<b>PROCESS CRITERIA</b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Criterion of resource accessibility	Public participants should have access to the appropriate resources to enable them to successfully fulfil their brief
2	Criterion of task definition	The nature and the scope of the participation task should be clearly defined
3	Criterion of structured decision making	The participation exercise should use/provide appropriate mechanisms for structuring and displaying the decision making process
4	Criterion of cost effectiveness	The procedure in some sense should be cost-effective

(Adapted from: Rowe and Frewer, 2000)

### **1.3 Approach and methods**

Based on the recommendations from the relevant literature a three-legged approach was adopted which relied upon the methodological insights developed by the normative criteria outlined by Rowe and Frewer (2000) (see Table 2), the aims of the project defined by the DoW and the project leader provided a second perspective and the views of the work package leaders and contributing consortium members offered a third perspective. The evaluation relies on several sources of information including:

- a) Participant observation at formal project consortium meetings and events
- b) Close liaison with the project leader throughout the project
- c) Informal discussions with project partners
- d) Formal, semi-structured interviews with 8 project partners<sup>1</sup>
- e) Document review of PERARES progress reporting and principal work package deliverables
- f) Review of the content and feedback arising in the self-evaluations produced by WP9 and completed by partners in other WP's
- g) Formal, semi-structured interviews with work package leaders concerning running online debates
- h) A final interview with the project coordinator

Copies of the interview guides can be found in Appendix 1 and 2 respectively.

In the following section the evaluation proceeds on the basis of examining the progress of the PERARES project against its overall aim and 8 principal objectives. Section 3 then provides a summary and a more general reflection on the impact, success and legacy of the project. Although, before progressing the authors wish to address how this report should be interpreted. This report is not intended to be overtly critical or attempt in any way to

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<sup>1</sup> The findings of the interviews also led to a peer reviewed paper with a broader scope: Emery, S.B., Emery, Mulder, H. A.J. and Frewer, L.J. (2014) 'Maximizing the policy impacts of Public Engagement: A European study', Accepted for publication in Science, Technology, & Human Values.

apportion blame for problems encountered during the project. Instead this report is intended to provide, to both those within and those external to the project, with an independent account of the work accomplished. It provides a cautious critique of the work conducted in relation to the eight guiding objectives and in so doing highlights areas for improvement which could potentially be of use to the future work of those involved in the PERARES project and to external stakeholders attempting to replicate any component of this complex project in the future. However, it must be noted that the evaluation has relied heavily on both engagements with project partners and the review of documentary evidence (WP deliverables and periodic reports). In this sense, one has to recognise that the content of this independent evaluation report has depended, to a great extent, on self-reported accounts of the projects progress and problems faced given by the project partners.

## **2. Evaluation against PERARES project objectives**

As outlined the presentation of the findings of the independent evaluation is structured in relation to the 8 core objectives of the PERARES project. Thus the following subsections will address each of these objectives in turn.

### **2.1 Objective 1:**

#### ***Encouraging a continuous “upstream” science-society dialogue***

Linking locally based science shop approaches to engagement with international online debates is a novel approach tested by the PERARES project with the objective of enhancing a continuous upstream science society dialogue. There are hence two principal elements to review when considering the extent to which the project has worked toward this objective. The first is the linking of the local and international approaches and the second is the extent to which ‘continuous’ and ‘upstream’ engagement is achieved.

After some technical difficulties in establishing the online debate platform (see 2.2) the PERARES online debate (WP2) successfully ran a pilot on nanotechnology and then extended the debates to cover the thematic areas covered in WP’s 5 and 6. In this sense the project has worked both down and up-scale in this linking process; taking first an internationally debated issue and extending this debate through local science shop-type mechanisms, and second taking issues developed at the local level and opened up for wider debate through the international platform. One of the issues that arose in this process was making sure that by changing the scale of application the issue remained of relevance and interest. Thus, in interviews with PERARES partners, for instance, several had said that trying to engender discussion of nano-technology at the local level had proved difficult because it might not have appeared immediately relevant to local contexts and concerns. Similarly, working the other way, issues developed at a very local level might have been considered too context-specific to be appropriate to an international debate. Nevertheless the debates have

succeeded in promoting some local engagement and the local engagement has succeeded in starting an online debate.

A second issue is the understanding of the concept of 'upstream'. In some cases the idea of upstream (especially when related to technological developments) relates to engagement that takes place before particular issues have been identified within the scientific community. In this sense it could be questioned whether the topics covered by PERARES are upstream since they develop existing issues. However, PERARES defines upstream more broadly as engagement processes that seek to deliver agenda-setting research questions and the novel approaches of linking mechanisms across different scales have demonstrated the potential of this approach. The continuity of the mechanism has been demonstrated by the development of new debates at regular intervals, this has included the launch of regular debates chaired by PERARES consortium members on a range of topics including, 'food gardens and the city', 'promoting local economic development' and 'natural resource issues across Europe'. This mechanism has also facilitated the development of dialogues at a local level (i.e. debates initiated at the Groningen and Romanian science shops). Moreover, the success that PERARES has had across its other objectives (see following sections) has helped provide the infrastructure through the establishment of new Science Shops contributing to the growth of the Science Shop network across Europe, the learning outcomes and the motivation for establishing this mechanism as a lasting output of the PERARES project. Whilst the online debates have been a novel approach trailed by the PERARES project, this has not been shown to compensate for the value of face-to-face engagement, which across all of the project outcomes has been highlighted to be of significant value to the development of science and society dialogue.

## **2.2 Objective 2:**

### ***Trans-national debate, web-portal and nano-technology pilot***

The development of the trans-national web-based debate portal can be regarded as being one of the principal outputs of the PERARES project and can be considered as a particular

success. However, using an online debate portal meant that the initial success and punctuality of this element of the project was contingent upon the development of technical software provision. Unfortunately this caused a delay to the establishment of the web platform because the original contractor tasked to develop the web site did not fulfil their obligations according to the specification and did not deliver according to the required timeframe. This led to legal action being taken against the contractor, the need to employ another contractor to take on the role and inevitable delays to the testing of the web portal through the nano-technology pilot. It should be noted however, that the PERARES team acted quickly, effectively and judiciously in resolving the issue and maintained close contact with the EU project officer in resolving the issue. This led to the appointment of a second web developer, who given time constraints was able to deliver a platform based on a generic framework, which although fit for purpose, was not specifically designed for the PERARES project as had originally been planned. Problems were also encountered in developing the sites online registration, which resulted in a registration process that was quite complex and on reflection could have prohibited discussion contributions being made. The delay in developing the platform also meant that there was no piloting of the nano-debate before the debate went live. However, the debate was considered a success and resulted in the creation of a set of recommendations to guide the online debate process and a set of rules for moderating the debates online, as well as a communications planning framework to be used by those running online debates. The nano-debate also highlighted the difficulty in bringing hard science to life, it was therefore recommended that subsequent debates considered societal challenges in addition to science driven topics.

As mentioned in Section 2.1 the debate successfully managed to link up with the local engagement mechanisms and the project team is hopeful that a mechanism of this nature will provide a long-term approach for continuous and upstream engagement beyond the life of the PERARES project. Since this was a novel tool, reflections on the success of the online debates was considered prudent and highlighted inevitable lessons to be learned from the process. First, the success of the debate was contingent upon not only developing a topic for debate, but also continuously motivating CSO's and academics to contribute to the online debate topic. Essentially the project found that it was not possible to put topics

online for debate and expect interest without considerable editorial effort in publicising and encouraging participation behind the scenes. In terms of resources, there was a feeling expressed from the PERARES partners that the resources and the amount of time required for establishing and maintaining the debates had been under-estimated, and initially with the nano-debate especially they had perhaps tried to run too many different topics simultaneously without appreciation of the time input required. In terms of other project partners from across the work packages there was a concern that additional resources could have been included within their own budgets to ensure that they could contribute fully to the debates and in working with CSO's at the local level to do so. This was expressed during interviews with both the partners leading the debate as well as those from other WP's who were contributing to them. From a coordinators perspective the choice of debate topics were intended to be in line with the individual interests of the Science Shops. Aligning the debated topics in this way was intended to increase motivation to stimulate debate between the Science Shop and their network of CSO's. In so doing the debates were intended to be part of their daily work and not viewed as additional to it. In this sense the coordinator felt that that the allocation of half a person month to contribute to the online debate as part of WP2 was adequate.

Discussion with the leaders of WP2 also highlighted the need for additional resources for language translation (to make it truly accessible to CSO's at an international level). From a coordinators perspective the amount of resources for translation could have been increased, and would be required to facilitate translation in the future. However, it was felt that the aim of the PERARES project was to establish this as a platform and pilot test it as a mechanism for engagement. This was achieved within the scope of the PERARES project, and future research and development of the platform would be required to consider the resources allocated for translation in order to make this platform more widely accessible.

Second, the individual debates generated varying degrees of interest, which should be recognised was by no means a reflection of the levels of time and effort contributed to developing the debate by debate leaders. However, it did raise the question as to what constituted a successful debate? If the measure of success is taken to be the number of research questions taken up then this was also dependant on a range of factors external to

the debates, including for example, the ability of the Science Shop and CSO's to interest students in the research topic and to take it up and complete the project. It is also worth recognising the wider contextual factors that influence the up-take of research questions at an EU level. For example the outcome of the domestic violence debate was the development of a concise research question relating to domestic violence in pregnancy which developed across select member states and was taken to the EU commission. The online debate platform highlighted the potential cost efficiency of developing research agendas virtually *vis-à-vis* more traditional approaches such as focus groups. However, for a question to be included on the EU commissions research agenda it must be developed bureaucratically across all member states, as the question here was developed involved only a select number of member states it did not progress.

All debate topics were carefully considered by the PERARES consortium at formal consortium meetings and the relevant expertise in the debate topic area was sought in the drafting of accompanying debate material. Interviews with those involved in starting online debates highlighted a number of issues that could provide key learnings from this exercise, which are now considered. First, the utility of a web-based forum for the generation of dialogue between stakeholders was questioned, the main concern being publicness of the forum (which lacked anonymity) and the formality of the site which was considered potentially perturbing for CSO's. This issue links in to the registration issues faced by the developers, although, the initial intention of the debates was to generate serious and high-quality comments with view to translating these into specific research questions, thus the consortium would be advised to consider whether making it possible to comment 'anonymously' will achieve the objective of creating research questions, or whether this will lead to more open debate on the topic but fewer concrete research questions. Second, following the debates a number of debate leaders had followed up with CSO's to evaluate the contributions made. From a CSO perspective the lack of clarity of the immediate benefit to the CSO of contributing to debates could have further reduced their enthusiasm for engaging with discussions and offering contributions. Third, from a technical perspective the ease of navigation of the web interface and the density of information provided on the site was also considered to be a potential barrier. Finally, in line with recognition of the need for

translation, debate leaders also acknowledged that the lack of translation could have further compounded this and prevented CSO's contributing to the discussions, recognising that the contributor may have felt self-conscious commenting in a public forum that was not in their native language (despite some translations facilitated by PERARES partners).

Although successful in implementing the online debate forum, PERARES project consortium members were actively considering ways in which this debate mechanism could be improved in the future. Consideration was given to the use of social media as a more immediate and informal mechanism. It was also suggested that wider contribution from CSO's in the debate areas could be achieved by linking debate with the webpages of national/international organisations relating to the topic considered. Such issues are not considered substantive as PERARES has fulfilled its objective to develop an online debating platform; they do however, provide learning outcomes for consideration if such an approach was to be further developed in the future. That said, technically the platform was considered a success, an online platform has been actualised which has been piloted through various live debates and will be available as a tool for generating debate and research questions beyond the PERARES project, in fact the consortium are encouraged to consider ways in which this platform can be incorporated into the current and future work. The tool will also be made available more widely to those wishing to incorporate into their work and future project proposals *via* the Living knowledge Network.

### **2.3 Objective 3:**

#### ***Increasing the number of bodies engaged in PER and sharing best practice***

PERARES has successfully established ten new Science Shop type mechanisms in countries across the EU, with more developed indirectly as a result of wider dissemination activities. The stimulus that the project has provided for this, in terms of both financial support and increased legitimacy was highlighted by all of the partners interviewed as one of the major successes of the project. The partners reported that PERARES had provided a real stimulus at the local level and had positively influenced the cultural and procedural openness to

public engagement within the various host institutes of the new Science Shops. Inevitably contextual variables meant that different Science Shops have attained success to varying degrees. So whilst the Science Shop in Lyon has been incredibly successful in gaining support from the university and in drawing in additional funding (from a national program) to continue with their activities, other initiatives have found their efforts stymied by institutional and cultural barriers and a complete lack of support for the idea of public engagement. For example, in the Estonian case, lack of support for the initiative was compounded by the fact that the Science Shop was external to the institution and thus lacked the credibility required to persuade the establishment of the value of its work, with many senior academics viewing this as additional and unnecessary work. Although a recently established co-operation with Tartu University may change the perception of this Science Shop.

Such differences do not reflect the merits of different partners, but the different contexts in which they operate. Moreover, cases of success and difficulty both provide useful learning outcomes for others wishing to develop Science Shops in places with little prior experience of PER mechanisms. The examples demonstrate that different amounts of resources, different approaches, and different expectations are needed in different contexts. This reinforced the approach adopted by the PERARES project that provided multiple models of Science Shop mechanisms and that advocated the provision of support tailored to the requirements of different operational contexts. All of the project partners reported that the approach to mentoring adopted by PERARES (whereby experienced Science Shop practitioners visit and are on hand to provide advice) and the networking and sharing of ideas between the new initiatives (also facilitated by WP5 and WP7) proved incredibly useful. One partner referred to the WP4 meetings and discussions as akin to *'therapy sessions'* whereby partners in different countries could share their experiences and learn from one another, with the financial provision made for travel between partners for mentoring purposes considered to be integral to this. Being able to provide face-to-face support through mentoring visits financed through the PERARES project has further affirmed the importance of face-to-face contact in developing community engaged research. Undoubtedly one of the principal successes and legacies of the PERARES project

has been to promote PER across the EU and to significantly increase the amount of CSO's engaged in research and research agenda-setting. The PERARES project has also been highly successful in strengthening the peer support network between advocates of PER across Europe, both Science Shops, individuals and between CSO's, creating a forum for mutual support and learning exchange. The momentum of the PERARES project and the financial assistance provided by the PERARES project has permitted project partners to travel globally to attend conferences, and submit abstracts and disseminate the Science Shop methodology beyond the internal PERARES peer support mentoring meetings. The impact of this is beginning to show, with an increase in new enquiries about establishing Science Shops being made to PERARES coordinators and some new Science Shops emerging as a result. Although it is unlikely that the true impact of this will be seen by the end of the PERARES project, this has made a significant stride in spreading the word and laying the foundations for the concept of Science Shops globally. This is not to say that the work here is done, rather that PERARES has given credibility to this movement and during the project has seen the creation of new Science Shops across Europe, as one partner put it the PERARES project has ensured that *'the ground is now fertile'* and it is hoped that dissemination activities conducted as part of the PERARES project will result in the emergence of more new Science Shops post PERARES.

In addition, and as will be considered in more detail in Section 2.7, the summer school events linked to the Living Knowledge LK5 and LK6 conferences have also contributed to the development of new Science shops. The summer schools provided an opportunity for PERARES consortium member to share their expertise and experience of setting up and embedding Science Shops within HEI policy and in the curriculum with delegates of and new to the Living Knowledge Network. An example of the value and success of these summer schools event is best evidenced by the set-up of a new Science Shop at Liverpool University. The initiative was established and received funding for 2 years as a direct outcome of attendance at the summer school held in conjunction with the LK6, Copenhagen conference.

It is recognised that community engagement mechanisms such as Science Shops take time to emerge and embed. Although, providing first hand advice and ongoing support to those

wishing to develop community engagement, will only act to further the reach of the Living Knowledge Network in the EU and beyond and inevitably will further contribute to the lasting legacy of the PERARES project.

#### **2.4 Objective 4:**

##### ***Setting up research agendas in the fields of domestic violence and Roma rights in direct co-operation with CSO's***

Successfully engaging with marginalised groups has been a principal achievement of the PERARES project. As articulated by one of the PERARES partners working in WP6, one of the greatest benefits of the project has been in giving greater legitimacy to social issues by providing a firm link to research and to research institutions, or, as he put it 'research has social power'. This proved particularly important where the organisation conducting the engagement was seen as a political activist and might not be afforded the same legitimacy by policy makers as a research institute.

The domestic violence programme (WP5) led to the development of a very precise mutual research question looking at domestic violence in pregnancy being taken forward and developed into a comparative research study between three European countries (UK, Norway and Belgium). This resulted in three student projects conducted in conjunction with higher education institutions (University of Cambridge, University of Stavanger and the Vrije University of Brussels) and local CSO's. The projects shared the same primary research question but the approaches to this were context specific reflecting differences in needs of local CSO's, as well as policy and health care provision across the three countries. This work offers a practical example of up-stream engagement, it demonstrates the ability of CSO and research institutions to cooperatively formulate research questions and it highlights the importance of mutual interaction and support between the CSO's and research students, and the value of the initiative as a bridge for stimulating knowledge exchange between CSO's working in the same field. This work also highlighted some of the challenges inherent in fostering up-stream engagement which are pertinent to consider and provide lessons for

future replication. Unfortunately the Belgian student-researcher was unable to complete their empirical study in the time permitted for the project which impacted on the ability to conduct transnational comparisons. This glitch highlights the difficulties associated with recruiting and retaining students. In addition the student projects highlighted a number of other challenges including contextual differences making the formulation of a mutual research question complicated, the difference in structure of academic programmes and the problems associated with fostering engagement between the students researchers and the CSO's over the duration of the research project and not solely at the beginning of the project.

By comparison the WP6 on the Roma and Travellers did also lead to the formulation of research questions, but, more importantly, it has led to the development of support activities and a research code of conduct for conducting research with Roma communities. By linking in with the online debates these local initiatives also provided the impetus for a wider ranging and more research-specific range of questions to be posited.

The two WP's also provided very useful learning outcomes for researchers wanting to engage with marginalised groups. In particular, the requirement to establish trust was shown to be paramount and this adds credence to the PERARES approach to foster long-term engagements, as members of WP6 remarked, engagement with the Roma community will not cease when the project comes to an end. It also shows the need for commitment from those responsible for the engagement, since a short-term engagement that fails to deliver on the marginalised groups' expectations can actually lead to greater mistrust and sense of alienation. The approach to this developed in Hungary (whereby a committed activist organisation with additional paid employment within a university) offers an interesting model that can help sustain the trust needed to maintain a long term engagement. The work conducted as part of WP6 also generated an interesting point for consideration which questioned whether CSO's really represent all citizens. Particularly in the case of marginalised groups, for example uneducated Roma women. This research highlighted that consideration should be given to the fact that not all will access services and of those that do, it has to be questioned the extent to which these represent all marginalised individuals. Consequently the outcomes of this WP have highlighted a strong

case for participatory action research in order to gain access to and work effectively alongside marginalised groups. Moving forward the lessons learnt from WP6 will be vital in helping Science Shops to consider their approaches for working with marginalised groups and how they might incorporate participatory action research into their general practice. Moreover, this in turn will help to ensure that their PER activities are working towards the theoretical evaluation criteria outlined by Rowe and Frewer, (2000) and increasing the ‘representativeness’ of public engagement activities.

## **2.5 Objective 5:**

### ***Pilot novel forms of engagement with CSO's***

WP3 conducted two separate country studies on how CSO's use research in their daily practice and how alternative approaches and contexts of engagement can have a bearing on their success. This approach, therefore, contributes to the wider project objective of establishing learning outcomes that are applicable to others wishing to establish or enhance engagement activities in different contexts.

WP3 trialled the use of scenario workshops as a mechanism for exploring the range of reasons why researchers and citizens engage to develop common research projects. The workshop approach had previously been tested by EU research (TRAMS) and was identified as a methodology that is useful for defining collaborative projects between actors with different backgrounds.

In the initial workshop, the topic and the profile of the participants was intentionally left open, however, problems arose in that it was difficult for participants to find points of convergence. In addition, the intention was to bring together those with little research experience and to provide a platform for developing and articulating research questions, however, many of the individuals and groups attending the pilot approaches were already well-versed in research and had well-honed research questions that they already wanted answering which again made finding common ground difficult.

Following this, WP3 ran 3 separate scenario workshops as case studies that represented the reasons for developing collaborative research and concern projects based on 'strategies' 'synergies' and 'developments'. Each of the workshops allowed adjustments to be made to the methodology including changes to the question, the selection of participants, timings, themes, the approach to the development of action plans and follow up activities.

One of the important learning outcomes from this work was to demonstrate the utility of the scenario workshop as an efficient and flexible approach for moving engagement upstream in a range of contexts. In other words, it provides a useful forum for discussion and eliciting novel concerns and issues that might not have previously been articulated as of research concern. Similarly this work has shown the importance for the longevity and success of engagement mechanisms of the personal commitment of the practitioners involved in overseeing the process, as opposed to the specific design of the process itself. The findings of this work recognised however, that the scenario workshop was one tool amongst others and it is not an exclusive step in the process which is often complex. The results also highlighted the importance of not considering the workshop as an isolated event. The process does not start from scratch and end after the scenario workshop. There is need to consider the steps taken beforehand in terms of preliminary meetings, goal setting and points and identification of blockages, whilst afterwards it is important to agree on an action plan and a means of monitoring progress.

## ***2.6 Objective 6:***

### ***Increase awareness of the value and practical utility of PER in HEI's and research funders***

This objective was targeted through WP7 and 8 on HEI policy and Research Funders respectively. WP7 focused on sharing of good practice in community engagement research across Europe at the level of the HEI. The work produced a number of outputs that are of considerable practical value to those attempting to embed community engagement within the curriculum of HEI's. First, WP7 produced a report on the state of the art of HEI policy on

community engagement based on experiences across Europe. This examined both the success factors and the barriers to embedding PE in HEI's and produced a very useable and beneficial model of best practice that could be applied in different contexts according to the opportunities and constraints presented by existing structures, procedures and attitudes, as noted as being pertinent to the success of Science Shop type mechanisms in section 2.3. In particular, this work offered useful and transferable findings on the importance of senior management support for PE, the relevance of economics (and particularly funding cuts) for engagement sustainability, and the value afforded to researchers engaged in PE in terms of opportunities for tenure, for promotion and prestige. Based on the work conducted in WP7 the report aimed to provide practical advice to support practitioners of community engagement to ensure the sustainability of their work through embedding this within HEI through the curriculum. Through models of best practice and lessons learnt from the practical sharing of curriculum support tools it provides invaluable insights into how community engagement can become embedded within, and an established feature of, higher education policy<sup>2</sup>. This work is of central relevance to those establishing Science Shop type initiatives within the PERARES project (objective 3, WP4) and beyond.

As noted above, WP7 provided a practical forum for sharing of best practice between PERARES members by piloting a structured exchange and sharing of models/tools through a supportive network of four community-based research initiatives within PERARES. This mechanism can be valued for formalising the sharing of resources between partners and beyond *via* the Living Knowledge network and providing an efficient and financially viable means of enhancing engagement. Although providing a framework for community based research practice, WP7 also illuminated the need for adaptation of tools/resources to suit the geographical context in which they are used, as it was recognised that what may work in one context may not in another.

Sharing of best practice and the mutual support of project partners facilitated by WP7 exchanges provides another example of the value of peer mentoring support between

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<sup>2</sup> Changes to higher education policy have been observed over the course of the PERARES project, notably in the case of the Republic of Ireland broadening of the Campus Engage national Network for information see: <http://www.campusengage.ie/about-campus-engage>.

practitioners. The development of a network of practitioners across Europe providing peer support and knowledge exchange can be considered to be one of the lasting legacies of the PERARES project. From a partner's perspective the exchange of best practice facilitated by PERARES was regarded to have increased self-confidence in launching new initiatives that were based on the tried and tested approaches of others. Additionally, the formalised forum for exchange of ideas facilitated by structured working events which mediated interaction between committed practitioners of PER and facilitated peer based approaches to problem solving permitted by WP7, was shown to be of greater importance to practitioners than the tools or resources alone.

In addition to the deliverables outlined in the DoW, WP7 produced a concise pocket guide to developing policy and strategy which provides practical advice to those wishing to develop Science Shop type initiatives. This was developed as a pocket guide based on the aforementioned report. The concise nature of this guide will inevitably appeal to and provide invaluable tips to those establishing or considering establishing a Science Shop and will have practical value in a number of scenarios including those lobbying within their institutions and higher education for the policy value of such initiatives and conversely for practitioners convincing CSO's of the value of engaged research. This additional output will also provide an additional layer of support to those involved in achieving objectives 1 and 3, and is a tangible marketing communications output that can support wider dissemination activities beyond the life of the PERARES project. It should also be recognised as further evidence of the PERARES project's consortium members' enthusiasm, commitment and belief in PER research and the methods of achieving and sustaining this as part of the project but also beyond.

Finally, WP7 culminated in a series of four policy discussion papers that drew on key learnings from WP7. Drawing on findings from PERARES and existing literature, the discussion papers build a policy case for public engagement through the curriculum and for brokering structures to support this work in a way that enables full participation by CSO's. These papers should offer persuasion to policy makers who are considering public engagement through the curriculum and offer clear policy arguments in the case for public

engagement in the curriculum to new and emerging Science Shops who are trying to develop support for their work.

Due to changes in project personnel greater difficulties were encountered in WP8. In particular, the Swedish Research Council (SRC), who was tasked with conducting a study of the opportunities afforded to public engagement by Research Council's in Europe. However, as the work progressed it became apparent that they did not share the same commitment to the merits of publically engaged research as the consortium. Whilst they did fulfil their obligations and devised a questionnaire for policy makers, it failed to offer a detailed explanation of both the benefits and challenges of community based research, and in the interviews they failed to tease out the reasons why supports for such work might not be offered by the relevant body. This difficulty represented a shift in personnel from the time at which the original proposal was drawn up and a seeming reticence on the part of the SRC to conduct research about other Research Councils. They came to the conclusion that engagement should remain a matter for universities and was not a concern for European Research Councils which was not a view shared. The matter was dealt with quickly and effectively by the PERARES project leader and partners from other work packages stepped in to conduct a more focussed and comparative study on the alternative approaches adopted by Research Funders. Queens University Belfast (QUB) took on responsibility for developing an interview pro-forma for discussion with research funders in conjunction with the Bonn science shop and other PERARES members. QUB collated information from funding bodies in the UK and Ireland, and Bonn collated information from Germany and the Netherlands and selected information was contributed from Romania, Italy and Spain. This resulted in a final compiled report that is different in expression throughout however, given the earlier difficulties experienced, is a robust report that in addition to considering the funding approaches in partner countries, also considers European Commission funding Schemes, as well as funding schemes in Canada (CURA) and France (PICRI, Chercheur Citoyennes, ASOSC) that the authors were aware of. The report submitted as part of this deliverable again reflected the passion for public engagement and the commitment of consortium members to the success of the PERARES project.

## **2.7 Objective 7:**

### ***Share best-practice in Science Shop activities and collaborate to identify and tackle bottlenecks***

As mentioned in Section 2.3 the PERARES approach is centred on the sharing of best-practice through networking, mentoring and close collaborative working. All of the partners involved in the project reported that this was one of its greatest strengths and was essential to ensure the sustainability of PER activities; in particular where local difficulties and obstacles were being faced.

In addition to this informal sharing of best-practice and networking, more formal assessment and evaluation of Science Shops and PERARES activities have been undertaken through WP9. In particular, an economic evaluation of Science Shop activity was undertaken *via* cost benefit analysis matrices, and a self-evaluation tool (to be used by PERARES partners) was developed, tested and implemented to provide a standardised tool for partners to evaluate their activities and to allow lessons to be learned from the process of developing self-assessment mechanisms. The economic evaluation demonstrated, with reasonable confidence, the economic efficiency of Science Shop approaches (both small and large) to conducting research *vis-à-vis* alternatives such as the commissioning of consultancy. In addition it highlighted the economic viability of Science Shops, the analysis further reinforced the intangible benefits associated with Science Shop initiatives that are less easy to quantify.

WP9 was also responsible for developing a set of indicators to evaluate the influence of CSO and public participation in the development of scientific knowledge and develop a replicable instrument for evaluation that was pilot tested on initiative undertaken by the Science Shops as part of the PERARES project. Given the broad scope of the PERARES project and the range of approaches to PER being piloted (including, Science Shops, online debate platforms, scenario workshops etc.) developing a standardised evaluation protocol was challenging. Therefore, it was diplomatically decided that the evaluation tool would be

designed to focus specifically on the evaluation of the Science Shop activities as this comprised a significant component of the PERARES project. Whilst WP9 recognised that there was unlikely to be a one size fits all approach to the evaluation, they developed a four stage quantitative evaluation questionnaire that was to be completed at the start, mid-point and end of the evaluation process and as a post project evaluation. The intention of the evaluation tool was for it to be relevant for all types of PER projects. At each stage of the evaluation questions centered around the following issues:

- Framing, objectives and aims
- Means, resources
- Organisation, transparency
- Involvement of the parties
- Expectations and outcomes
- Reorientation
- Most valuable/most difficult issues

WPs were asked to use these resources throughout the duration of their project and to reflect on these with colleagues and project partners including CSO partners. In addition to the forms, guidance on how to complete and use the forms was given, this included instruction that the tool was intended to be flexible to different PER activities and used as a basis for evaluation, with project partners encouraged to adapt the tool to suit their individual needs. The guidance also included the recommendation that the project partners ought to identify whom within the project was responsible for the evaluation, which stakeholders would be included within the evaluation and to ensure that the purpose and scope of the evaluation was considered by all project partners. The evaluation forms were also sent to 6 well established Dutch science shops to act as a comparator to their existing evaluation processes. The evaluation was piloted towards the end of 2012 and revisions made based on the results of the pilot in 2013.

The periodic reports submitted to the commission showed evaluation to be integrated into the practice of each of the WPs, however, the level of engagement with the evaluation material and evaluative processes, defined by WP9 varied considerably across the partners.

Although in general, uptake, return and constructive feedback from WPs during the development of the evaluation tools was considered to be slow and return of feedback required the project coordinator to 'nudge' partners and encourage partner engagement with the task. This failure to engage with the evaluation process could in part have been attributed to the failure of project partners to see this tool as flexible to their individual requirements and instead dismissing it as not relevant to their activities.

Engagement with the evaluation material also appeared to be dependent upon how established the Science Shop was and or the experience of those involved in the WP which influenced the extent to which they considered the evaluation to be valuable. More experienced Science Shops viewing this to be 'additional work' and not contributing anything to their practice over and about what they already do. The main benefit considered by the respondents was the opportunity that this presented for critical reflection on the work conducted and as basis for discussion. However, there were a number of constructive points raised for improvement of the tool which will now be considered.

Consensus across the partners showed preference for the evaluation activity to be short in length and used as a means of triggering reflection/discussion within the research teams. Although, it was highlighted that often it was difficult to get all project partners together to complete the evaluation and or return the evaluation if completing the evaluation individually. Despite this there was also the sense that this questionnaire format was too long and particularly problematic was the quantitative closed nature of the questions that did not adequately reflect the complex nature of public engagement. One respondent questioned the extent to which a quantitative questionnaire could capture this complexity and consequently made this more of a 'tick-box' exercise. The quantitative nature of the evaluation of the questionnaire was also criticised as it did not permit the recording of action points, outcomes or issues for follow up and there was reported confusion as to what should be done with the results of the questionnaire. The following quote highlights these concerns *'Several WP-members have trialled using the templates and have found it challenging to use them to reflect the level of description necessary for this process which was developmental in nature'*. Moreover, the lack of qualitative explanation was considered

to detach the evaluation from the project as it did not permit elaboration through case examples.

The quantitative nature of the questionnaire was also highlighted to have impacted on the extent to which these questionnaires were used as the basis for discussion with some partners confessing to have completed the evaluation individually as one partner identified *'nothing in it prompted me to take any specific action or address anything with anyone else'*. This was compounded by the fact that the questionnaire was not translated into all partner languages (project partners did translate these tools into Italian and Dutch) which would have required additional resource on the part of the partners, and or it did not take into consideration the sensitivities of some partners (i.e. Roma partners) that in some instances were not literate and required alternative approaches to evaluation.

Whilst the division of the questionnaire into four discrete time points was well received, there appeared to be confusion over the point, at which this tool should be administered, which as one respondent identified could have been a consequence of the formatting of the form and the four time points of the evaluation being combined in one form. For clarity it was recommended that this should be broken down into four individual forms. All partners recognised the importance of embedding evaluation within the process, although given the issues highlighted this tool was not considered adequate for this. Furthermore, there was some confusion shown over the scale of the questionnaire, and whether the evaluation tool was intended to evaluate individual projects or contribution to the PERARES project as a whole which were identified to have different evaluative needs.

The wording of the questions were also considered to be overtly negative, as one WP leader highlighted that within the questionnaire deviations from the project brief were considered to be negative and neglected that these could potentially be positive and indicative of learning and development. Again the quantitative nature of the tool did not allow this to be captured. That said, whilst it is often favourable and advantageous to develop tailor-made evaluations tool to address the individual needs of each of the PER approaches and it is recognised that there is not a one size fits all solution, the evaluation did succeed in initiating self-reflection of their practice amongst project partners and provides a comprehensive although not exhaustive basis for discussion of practice and provides useful

learnings for those wishing to further develop the evaluation tools beyond the PERARES project. Recommendations for the future development of the evaluation tool included; developing an online version of the evaluation tool, providing translations of the tool in different languages and making this available both online and in paper versions. In addition, it was suggested that in future an institutional framework for evaluation at different levels should be developed, including a framework for evaluation at the level of the Science Shop, the institution and at a national level and for the need to connect evaluations with valorisation procedures in order to increase the visibility of Science Shop work.

## **2.8 Objective 8:**

### ***Share project findings through two international conferences***

PERARES has disseminated project findings in a number of ways, including through quarterly electronic newsletters, and magazines, two international conferences and through summer school workshops. The electronic newsletter and magazine was distributed through the Living Knowledge Network, published by PERARES consortium contributor Wissenschaftsladen Bonn and disseminated to subscribers to the Living Knowledge discussion list and *via* social media. The newsletter provides an opportunity to disseminate the achievements of the PERARES project to the Living knowledge network and beyond. Considerable editorial effort is required to sustain the publications which rely on timely contributions from consortium members. The editors expressed that this was not often forthcoming from project partners and there was opportunity to greater utilise this as part of the 'tool-kit' for spreading the word of the Science Shop methodology and the good work conducted as part of the PERARES project.

PERARES has also organised two international conferences to engage PERARES with the wider Science Shop and science in society community both of which were considered highly successful in promoting PER the work of PERARES and building momentum around the initiative and the Living Knowledge network. The 5th Living Knowledge Conference was

held in Bonn in May 2012 and its resounding success can be attributed to the organisational ability and commitment of PERARES WP10 partners and the wider PERARES team. The conference attracted 220 participants with 71 presentations and allowed each of the PERARES WP's to report their interim findings of the project and attain feedback from an international audience. Engagement was enhanced through the use of live web-streaming of the plenary sessions, which attracted call-ins from 373 individuals from 20 different countries around the world. The conference provided a genuine environment for mutual learning, both within and beyond the PERARES team.

Building on the success of the Bonn conference, the 6<sup>th</sup> Living Knowledge conference was held in Copenhagen in April 2014 and was co-ordinated by WP11. The conference was intended to build on the work of previous LK conference by bringing together key thinkers and practitioners in the area of community based research under the theme "*An innovative civil society: Impact through co-creation and participation*". The success of the conference was attributed to the organisational efforts of the WP11 team in putting together an exciting and varied programme of events. The success of this conference was also attributable to the hard work and support of the PERARES consortium members and their CSO's who contributed significantly to the conference programme, sharing both research findings and practical experiences. The conference was organised into eight integrated themes, and provided a platform for the dissemination of the conclusive findings of the PERARES project amongst policy and attain feedback on its work from an international audience. Popular themes included, '*social innovation- empowering civil society*', '*sustainable development: from vision to transition*' and '*developing the university- civil society interaction*'. The conference welcomed 257 delegates from 27 countries including Nepal, Brazil and the USA. Plenary sessions were streamed through the use of live web-streaming (YouTube) and are available to view *via* YouTube. The live streaming of the plenary session attracted call-ins from 51 individuals from 6 countries.

Both conferences were preceded by the running of a Science Shop summer school. The LK6 summer school was attended by 26 delegates from 11 countries including Europe, North America and Canada. This provided a further forum for sharing of best practice from

established Science Shops within the PERARES project to those thinking of or in the early stages of developing Science Shop initiatives. As noted in section 2.3 these workshops have facilitated the establishment of new Science Shops, which contributes to the number and reach of Science shops across Europe that have been legitimised by the PERARES project.

The success of the Living Knowledge conferences and the associated summer schools delivered as part of the PERARES project has been attributable not only to the commitment of the Work Packages involved in their organisation and management but to the significant input from PERARES consortium members as well as their partner CSO's.

### 3. Strategic Impact

In addition to evaluating the extent to which the PERARES project has achieved its primary objectives, it is also prudent to consider the extent to which the project has achieved the strategic impacts required by the original call for proposals and as detailed in the DoW. The key strategic impacts were as follows:

***i. An improved transnational co-operation between research bodies, in the domain public engagement in research.***

Improved trans-national co-operative working has been achieved through the linking of a range of research bodies with different and diverse backgrounds. This was principally achieved through the successful development and piloting of an online debate platform (WP2 & 3), and through the establishment of 10 new Science Shops across Europe (WP4). The longevity of these initiatives was ensured and will continue to be facilitated by mutual peer support made possible by the PERARES project. Moreover, face-to-face mentoring has laid the foundations for lasting relationships amongst PER practitioners across Europe and beyond, which are certain to endure past the life of the PERARES project (WP4 & 7). The collaborative studies conducted in the field of domestic violence (WP5) are testament to the success of PERARES in demonstrating the ability of diverse research bodies to work together to improve PER in social science research. WP7 and WP8 have succeeded in providing tangible resources to illustrate models of best practice to assist Science Shop start-ups and provide practical advice as to how Science Shop initiatives can embed PER into the curriculum and HEI policy, thus ensuring the longevity of PER in research at an institutional level.

***ii. An improved mobilisation of researchers to engage with civil society in their practices***

The number of practitioners involved in PER has increased exponentially through the creation of 10 new Science Shop mechanisms across Europe (WP4) achieving this objective. This has significantly increased the size of the PER network across Europe and through

mentoring facilitated by WP 4 and 7 and has enabled mutual learning and exchange of best practice, that has acted to strengthen the links between practitioners within this network. The success of the new Science Shops is demonstrated by the number of completed and active research projects conducted over the duration of the PERARES project.

The summer schools held as part of WP4 in conjunction with the LK conferences have provided an additional mechanism for dissemination and have broadened access to resources of good practice to those beyond the PERARES consortium. Sharing of best practice in this way has resulted in the creation of additional science shops in Europe and beyond which has undoubtedly made it easier for scientists across Europe to engage with civil society. Although it is realised that establishing a science shop does not happen immediately, it is hoped the summer schools and the mutual support offered by the Living Knowledge network will help to establish more Science Shops across Europe and beyond in the future.

***iii. An increased participation of civil society actors in research activities and enhanced incorporation of needs and concerns of all society in research strategies***

Increasing the number of civil society actors in research activities has been one of the principle achievements of the PERARES project that has been facilitated in a number of ways. The increased number of Science Shop type mechanisms across Europe has provided a physical interface between CSO and researchers and has provides local CSO's the ability to request research that will facilitate their work. Moreover, increasing the number of institutions across Europe with Science Shop mechanisms in turn means that more CSO's across Europe have access to and are able to commission research. In creating new Science Shops across Europe the PERARES project has demonstrated that the infrastructure has the ability to be, and has been, accepted as part of the hosting institute's research strategy. The structured approach to the creation of the Science Shops has proven this mechanism to be more than a temporary approach to PER and whilst the PERARES project has provided the impetus to begin these initiatives, through mentoring and the work conducted in WP7 and 8 these mechanisms have been aided to become embedded within policy at local and national levels and developed into lasting mechanisms for PER which will deliver impact long beyond the life of the PERARES project.

The success of the new shops across Europe over the duration of the PERARES project can be seen in the significant number of active and completed research projects conducted by the newly established Science Shops. In addition, the completion of the social science projects by WP 5 and 6 whereby CSO's participated directly in the research process, and the contributions made by CSO's to the online debates (WP2 and 3) are a further measure of the mobilisation of CSO actors engaged in research facilitated by the PERARES project. The online debates have also aided interaction between CSO's and researchers in providing them with an alternative mode of voicing their research needs and increasing the opportunities for these to be taken forward and incorporated in research agendas. This is further reinforced by involvement of CSOs on the advisory boards of the new Science Shops (WP4). Finally the active interest in research has been further demonstrated by the active participation of CSO's involved in the PERARES project in the Living Knowledge conferences which has acted to demonstrate the utility of engaged research from the perspectives of the CSOs.

***iv. The definition of new co-operative research agenda involving researchers and civil society actors and combining their respective knowledge and experiences.***

As already highlighted, at a local level the PERARES project has demonstrated its success in defining new co-operative research agendas. This has principally been achieved through the creation of new science shops across Europe which has provided a shop front, inviting participatory research and has created many new requests for research (see deliverable 4.2, Appendix 5). At a transnational level the networking facilitated formally by the PERARES project and the time accounted for this activity at all consortium meetings has helped to build strong collaborative links between partners, who are now actively seeking new collaborative funding opportunities together. Time allocated specifically for networking has also given the consortium the opportunity to share research requests and refer these amongst one another. From the international debates facilitated by WP2, particularly in the field of domestic violence, specific research questions have been developed that have been formally presented to the EU commission (although these have not been taken up) demonstrating the utility of the portal as a research agenda setting tool.



## 4. Coordinator Reflections and Concluding Remarks

A final interview was conducted with the PERARES project coordinator Dr Henk Mulder in August 2014 to provide him with an opportunity to reflect on the experience of coordinating the PERARES project. From a practical perspective, coordinating a project with 28 project partners across Europe and 12 individual Work Packages is a challenging managerial task made easier by the EUs online submission system, which Dr Mulder reported to have helped considerably with reporting and providing information to project partners. However, the task of managing this large project was perhaps under resourced and had taken considerably more time and financial resource than was accounted for. That said the success of the PERARES project came principally from the commitment and the dedication to PER from the partners of the PERARES project. Dr Mulder considered himself fortunate to have had the opportunity to work alongside champions of public engagement across Europe, who have genuine passion and dedication to this end. This was perfectly summarised by Dr Mulder in comparing PERARES projects with his experience of other projects when he said *'other projects were just work but PERARES was family'*. This commitment to the success of the project was also reported to extend to the project officers that in the face of challenges were felt to be thinking along with you and trying to find solutions.

Whilst the results of the PERARES project could not have been achieved without the enthusiasm and commitment of the project partners, there were inevitable challenges experienced along the way. Dr Mulder recognises however, that engagement work is heavily dependent on attitudes, openness and receptiveness to the notion of PER and whilst some see considerable benefit in this approach others may not. It was also recognised that the cultures in research institutions, funding bodies and CSO's are not static and just as it is possible to persuade individuals of the merits of civil society engagement this is often carried with individuals who can move on to different roles, having a significant effect on receptivity within institutions.

There is a shared enthusiasm about the future of PER post PERARES, with recognition that the horizon for policy inclusion is broader than it was prior to the PERARES project. The momentum behind the PERARES project has helped to broaden awareness of the utility of civil society engagement in research and widened the physical footprint of Science Shops across Europe. One of the principle achievements of the PERARES project has been the credibility it has given to the cause for PER in research, going a considerable way to legitimising this as a prominent policy concern at both the level of HEI's and within research funders and the European commission. Specifically within the PERARES project the passion and interest of a small group of individuals committed to this end has created considerable momentum across Europe and beyond for engaged research which will undoubtedly continue post PERARES. Evidence of this can be seen in the number of new and established Science Shops that were involved in the PERARES project that are working together to put together proposals for the next round of EU funding.

## **5. Independent Evaluator Reflections on the Evaluation Process**

Research is recognised to be a reflective process (Mason, 2002). The lack of theoretical literature to support the independent evaluations process, and the opportunity it provides to address some of the central limitations of the independent evaluation process, makes it prudent for the evaluator to provide some brief reflections on the process of evaluating the PERARES project. In this regard, the evaluator considers there are two principle issues to address, first the issue of trust and rapport building between the evaluator and the consortium members to ensure that the evaluation was meaningful for all stakeholders. Second the quality and impartiality of the evidence upon which the independent review was conducted.

Fundamental to the success of the independent evaluation was the development of trust between the evaluator and the consortium, and whilst the independent evaluation was designed to be integrated into the project from the outset, ensuring that the evaluator remained impartial was essential. Whilst impartiality of the evaluator was respected by all consortium members, developing trusting working relationships in order to ensure that consortium members felt able to provide open and honest accounts of the work they were conducting as well as self-reflecting on the process as a whole was a key challenge. Whilst post hoc self-reflection is routine it is often a more difficult practice to engage with during the working process. Reinforcing impartiality and non-critical judgement was paramount, which in part required consistent re-assurances to be given to consortium members that opinions shared would be accurate in reflection and would not be miss-represented within the evaluation report.

A second issue to consider relates to the impartiality of the data on which the evaluation was conducted. As this report highlights the range and the quality of the work conducted during the PERARES project was significant. However, the evaluation itself relied heavily on self-reported accounts of the work conducted either through interviewing consortium members, or documentary review of WP deliverables and periodic reports. Whilst the

evaluator was free to make an impartial judgment of the information provided it had to be recognised that this had potential to be a slightly biased account<sup>3</sup>. In addition, whilst the evaluator was present at all consortium meetings, they were not privy to communications between WPs or present at WP meetings which would have posed significant logistical challenges within the PERARES project given its size, although this may be desirable for future projects in order to address the issues associated with self-reporting outlined above.

That said the evaluation team found the PERARES consortium open to the independent evaluation process. Without exception the consortium were friendly, approachable and willing to share their experiences in order to strengthen learning outcomes and provide insights for future replication of any aspect of the project.

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<sup>3</sup> This is recognised in Section 1.3.

## 6. Summary

In summary the PERARES project has made a significant impact on PER in Europe through: widening the number of organisations and institutions operating Science Shop or similar activities; increasing the number of CSO's involved in research agenda setting; engaging with especially marginalised and under-represented groups; trialling novel approaches to PER and, in particular, demonstrating the utility of combining international debates with local Science Shop activity; providing a sound review of the policy, economic and institutional environment for PER, and; through learning outcomes sharing the experience of the project to provide recommendations that will work toward the objective of establishing a continuous and upstream science and society relationship across Europe.

The successes of the project have not come without challenges and one of the greatest difficulties, as with anything funded on a finite 'project' basis, is ensuring legacy and a lasting change to attitudes, policies and procedures. This was certainly raised as a concern among PERARES partners who feared that lack of funding and the unpredictable attitudinal and contextual factors affecting engagement activities at the local level could still hinder efforts to continue engagement activities into the future. PERARES has, however, genuinely increased engagement activities and awareness of the importance of PER across Europe. Moreover, it has increased the *capacity* for PER by providing the infrastructure and learning outcomes that can be carried forward into future activities. Inevitably the success of individual elements of the project has varied; with certain new initiatives demonstrating longevity by attracting further external funding to support their activities, and others still struggling to overcome institutional and cultural barriers to PER in their own particular context (see section 2.3). Yet all such examples provide equally important learning outcomes, and demonstrate the barriers to be faced and the opportunities to be realised in vastly different contexts across Europe. The PERARES project has also demonstrated that it has had a lasting impact on institutional policies, as well as governmental and EU strategies

for engaged research. Extending the project by 6 months (from 4 to 4.5 years)<sup>4</sup> has also allowed further work to be undertaken to ensure the longer term sustainability of the mechanisms and findings that PERARES has supported. One of the greatest successes and areas of certain lasting impact is the highly positive and productive working relationships that have been established through the PERARES consortium. It is clear that such relationships will be maintained long after the PERARES project has finished and will be used to continue sharing best practice and to work collaboratively into the future through the Living Knowledge Network. The importance of such relationships in establishing a critical mass of PER-savvy researchers and activists across Europe must not be under-estimated.

In all discussions with project partners, in formal interviews and in observing the organisation and management of the project, the success of PERARES owes an incredible amount to the efforts and abilities of the Project Leader Dr Henk Mulder. PERARES is a vast project with many project partners, many WPs and different elements that need very careful management in order to ensure that the various different work streams are integrated effectively and working towards the same common objectives for the project. Any problems that arose in the course of the project were swiftly and appropriately dealt with and the enjoyable and conducive atmosphere evident among partners can be largely attributed to Dr Mulder's careful yet passionate approach to the management of the project. It must also be recognised that the successful management of the project under the coordination of Dr Mulder was significantly supported by the WP leaders who managed tasks and deliverables and collectively addressed bottlenecks to ensure the successful delivery of the PERARES project.

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<sup>4</sup> Contract amendment late 2013, because budget allowed and there could be added learning and dissemination.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Interview Discussion Guide



#### Experiences of leading an online debate

##### Interviewees

- Nicky Buckley: University of Cambridge (WP2)- Nanotechnology
- Jozefien De Marrée (WP5 leader)- Domestic violence and Roma/Travellers
- Balint Balazs
- Meira Hanson (Local economic development)
- Gerard Straver (Food and gardening in the City)
- Rodica Stanescu (Natural resource Issues Across Europe)
- Pdraig Murphy (Natural resource Issues Across Europe: Gas and oil exploration in Ireland and Crete)

*UNEW have been tasked with independently evaluating the performance of the PERARES project as part of work package 9 'Monitoring and Evaluation'. The establishment of online debate platform has been a key contribution of the PERARES project and as part of the evaluation process we would like to discuss with WP leaders and debate leaders their experiences of preparing and leading an online debate. The interview should take no longer than 30 minutes of your time and with your permission the interview will be digitally recorded to aid with analysis. The answers that you provide will remain confidential and will only be shared with the evaluation team at Newcastle University; no names will appear in the write up of the final evaluation report.*

##### **PROCESS (resource allocation):**

*I would like to begin the interview by considering how you began the process of setting up your online debate. I would like to begin by asking you...*

- a. How long did it take to develop a topic for debate?
  - a. Did you have sufficient time and resources to develop your topic for debate?
  - b. Did you have sufficient resources to develop your topic for debate?
    - i. *Financial*
    - ii. *Staff support*
    - iii. *Enthusiasm and institutional support*
  
- b. What (if any) were the main barriers faced when developing your topic for online debate?
  - i. *Time lag*
  - ii. *Language*
  - iii. *Gaining contributions from others*
  - iv. *Publicity of the debate*

**IMPACT:**

*I would now like to consider the outcomes of your online debate.*

- a. What have been the outcomes of your debate in terms of research questions generated?
  - a. Have your research questions been taken forward (i.e. calls for proposals, student research projects?)
- b. Reflecting on the 'online' debate platform...
  - a. How has conducting the debate 'online' impacted upon the discussion topic?
    - i. *How would this compare to conducting debates face-to-face?*

**ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

*Thinking more broadly about the activities of your Science Shop relating to the PERARES project...*

- a. What additional activities have been undertaken as part of PERARES within your Science Shop?
  - i. *Which of these have been successful/unsuccessful and why?*

## **SUSTAINABILITY:**

*In terms of support for public engagement given by your institution...*

- b. What level of support are there for PE in influencing research agendas among HEIs and funding institutes where you are based?
- c. How sympathetic are governments/research funding bodies to engagement in your country?
- d. How well embedded within your institution is your Science Shop?
- e. Do you have sufficient resources to continue the work of your Science Shop beyond the PERARES project?
  - i. Financial*
  - ii. Staff support*
  - iii. Enthusiasm and institutional support*

## **FUTURE:**

*Finally I would like to think about the future beyond the PERARES project and its legacy.*

- f. What lessons have you learnt from this process?
- g. Would you do things differently if you were to do this again?
- h. What would be your recommendations to those developing topics for debate online?
- i. How will you develop on the work you have conducted over the duration of the PERARES project?
- j. How did you find the evaluation exercise? Have you completed this? Did you have sufficient time to complete this? Were the questions asked appropriate? What were the barriers to completing this if any?

## Appendix 2



### INTERVIEW DISCUSSION GUIDE: DR Henk Mulder

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2014

#### INTRODUCTION:

*UNEW have been tasked with independently evaluating the performance of the PERARES project as part of work package 9 'Monitoring and Evaluation'. This interview conducted with the PERARES project co-ordinator Dr Henk Mulder is intended to provide an opportunity for the co-ordinator to reflect on the project and its achievement. The interview will consider the initial aims and objectives framing the project and will consider the extent to which the project has achieved these aim. The interview will also provide an opportunity for the co-ordinator to reflect on the successes and lessons learnt from the project before consideration is given to the legacy of the project and the next steps beyond the PERARES project.*

*The interview should take no longer than one hour of your time and with your permission the interview will be digitally recorded to aid with analysis. The answers that you provide will remain confidential and will only be shared with the evaluation team at Newcastle University.*

#### **1. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PERARES PROJECT:**

*I would like to begin the interview by thinking about the eight objectives that framed the overall research project. We will consider each of the objectives in turn.*

*Objective 1 was to encouraging a continuous "upstream" science-society dialogue...*

- 1. How did the PERARES project aim to achieve this?**
- 2. To what extent do you think the PERARES project has been successful in achieving this? Expand/probe**

- a. ***Can you provide examples of how the project has been successful in achieving this?***
  - i. ***What mechanisms have been particularly successful?***
  - ii. ***What mechanisms have not worked and why?***
- b. ***Can you provide examples of problems that have been the problems encountered in achieving this objective?***
- c. ***What are the lessons to be learnt from attempting to achieve continuous “upstream engagement”***
- d. ***How could the approaches used by the PEAPRES project to this end be improved in the future?***

*Objective 2 Development of a trans-national debate, web portal and nano-technology pilot.*

*One of the principle achievements of the PERARES project has been its ability to trail novel mechanisms for public engagement, one of which has been the development of the online debate platform which was developed in accordance with objective two. Considering the development and the piloting of this portal:*

3. ***To what extent do you think the online debating portal has been a success?***
  - a. ***How have you measured the success of this portal?***
  - b. ***Do you think this is a mechanism that can be used to facilitate up-stream engagement in the future?***
4. ***What if any have been the problems encountered as part of the development of the portal?***
5. ***How can this mechanism be improved for the future?***
6. ***What will be the use of the portal beyond the life of the PERARES project?***

*Objective 3: Increasing the number of bodies engaged in PER and sharing best practice*

*The PERARES project has been successful in increasing the number of science shop type mechanisms across Europe and has developed a network of professionals engaged in this activity.*

1. ***To what extent is the success of these mechanisms equal across Europe?***

2. ***What will be the fate of these mechanisms post PERARES? (i.e. once funding is not in place)***
3. ***Is there evidence of new initiatives emerging based on the dissemination of best practice work facilitated by the PERARER project?***
4. ***Will the mutual support network continue post-PERARES?***
  - a. ***If yes, how will this be facilitated***

*Objective 4: Setting up research agendas in the fields of domestic violence and Roma rights in direct co-operation with CSOs.*

*I am aware that this objective was addressed by two different WPs, WP7 & WP8, I would like to consider these each in turn.*

1. ***To what extent do you think the PERARES project has been successful in achieving this? Expand/probe***
  - a. ***In the field of domestic violence (what have been the main successes of this WP)***
  - b. ***In the field of Roma (What have been the main successes of this WP)***
2. ***What if any were the challenges encountered in achieving this objective?***
  - a. ***In the field of domestic violence***
  - b. ***In the field of Roma***
3. ***What are the lessons to be learnt from these WP's for those intending to engage with marginalised groups in the future?***

*Objective 5: Pilot Novel Forms of Engagement with CSO's*

*This was addressed by WP3 that trialled the scenario workshop as a mechanism for engagement with CSOs this was developed by French partners but also trialed by Cambridge UK. I would like to consider...*

1. ***How successful have the workshops been in engaging CSO and developing collaborative projects?***
  - a. ***How has the success of this approach been measured?***
  - b. ***Have there been any collaborative projects developed as a result of the Scenario workshops held in either France or Cambridge?***

**2. What have been the challenges of this approach?**

- a. *In France*
- b. *In Cambridge*

**3. What are the lessons learnt from this approach for the future?**

**4. How will this approach be used in the future post PERARES?**

*Objective 6: Increase awareness of the value and practical utility of PER in HEI's and Research Funders*

*This has been regarded as a particular success of the PERARES project in producing models of best practice for embedding public engagement within higher education policy and facilitating sharing of best-practice and support tools between practitioners.*

**1. To what extent do you feel that the PERARES project has succeeded in promoting the practical utility of PER in**

- a. *HEI*
- b. *Research funders?*

**2. Is there evidence that the PERARES project has succeeded in embedding in policy?**

- a. *Can you give examples of this? i.e. have there been distinctive policy changes as a result of the PERARES project?*

**3. What more needs to be done to embed PER in HEI and research funders?**

*Objective 7: Share best-practice in science shop activities and collaborate to identify and tackle bottlenecks*

*Sharing of best practice through peer mentoring has been vocalised as a particular strength of the project. Identifying and tackling bottle necks has been addressed through the development of an evaluation process.*

- 1. How successful do you feel the evaluation framework developed by the project has been?**
- 2. In your opinion how can the evaluation process be improved?**
- 3. How can engagement with the evaluation process be improve for future use?**
- 4. What are the lessons learnt from the evaluation process?**

*Objective 8: Sharing of project findings through two international conferences*

*The statistics of the living knowledge conferences held as part of the PERARES project demonstrate the success of the conference. I would like to talk about the summer schools...*

**1. Can you provide evidence of the success of the summer schools?**

**a. Have new science shop type mechanisms been developed as a result of the summer schools**

#### **THE CONSORTIUM**

*From a co-ordinators perspective I would now like to gain your thoughts into the challenges associated with the management of the project.*

**1. What have been the challenges of co-ordinating a project of this size?**

**2. How well has the consortium worked together?**

**a. Have there been any problems from a managerial perspective with any consortium members (thinking particularly about the Swiss partner)**

**b. Have there been any particular stand out successes? (here I can think of many but would like your opinions) or collaborations that will continue post PERARES?**

#### **LEGACY AND FUTURE**

*Finally, we have thought about each of the individual objectives, I would now like to consider the PERARES project as a whole and consider what have been the stand out successes and challenges and what will be the lasting legacy of the project?*

**1. The main successes of the project? What has worked particularly well and why?**

**2. The main challenges faced? Why and what was done to over-come these?**

**3. What have been the main lessons learnt?**

**4. What do you think will be the lasting legacy of the PERARES project?**

**5. What are the next steps beyond PERARES?**

*Thank you for your time and contributions to the evaluation report.*