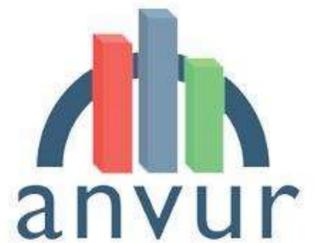


ENGAGED UNIVERSITIES



◆ The view from Italian third mission national evaluation experience ◆

Third mission activities are by no means totally new phenomena (e.g. Liebig's fertiliser venture in the mid-19th century, see 1; 2). The emergent element is the societal push for interacting with non-academic domains (3; 4; 5) that is leading institutions to reframe and better communicate these activities, i.e. the *institutionalization* of university-industry linkages.

The new societal demand triggers also growing public accountability, what has been defined an *impact agenda* (6). In many performance-based research funding systems (e.g. UK, Australia) incentives have been put on scientific results that benefit society. Also in Italy specific initiatives have been carried out at this aim.

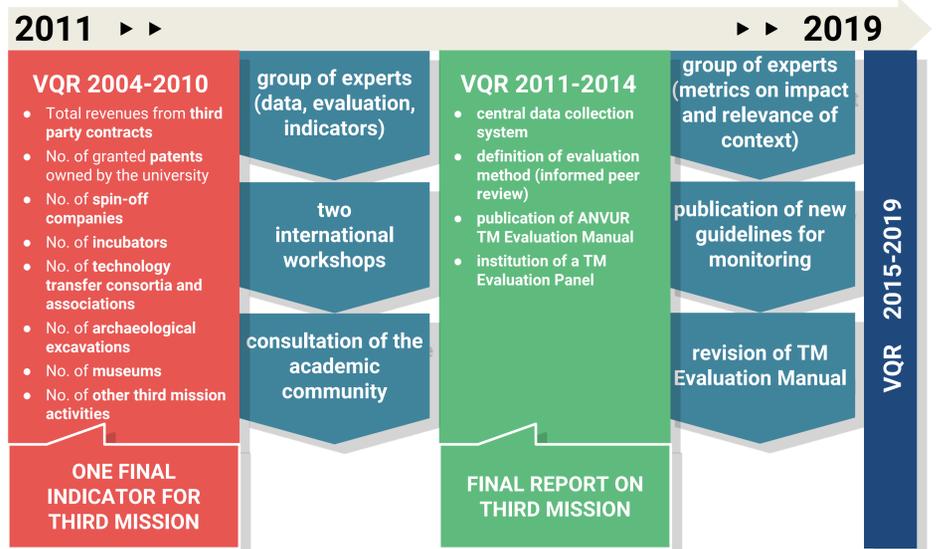
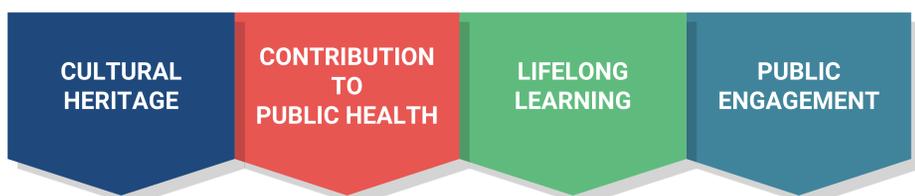
Since the start of the first national research assessment exercise, *Evaluation of Research Quality* (VQR) 2004–2010, a pioneering work has been done by ANVUR, using a participatory approach to set a perimeter around the concept of third mission and to develop a wide evaluation model able to ensure fair comparison, suitable data and reliable metrics.

The Manual published by ANVUR in 2015 (after an international review and the endorsement of a public consultation) contains the main methodological choices: the adoption of a broad definition of third mission, including the societal dimension alongside the technology one (7) and the design and development of a qualitative-quantitative evaluation toolkit, subsequently experimented in the second round of the research assessment exercise, VQR 2011-2014. Besides activities related to valorization of research, i.e. the transformation of goods supported by public funding into private goods (spin-off companies, patents ...), also those "activities which have spillovers on society at large through the production of public good" have been taken into account, e.g. the creation and management of cultural heritage, Life Long Learning programmes, clinical trials, and the production of advice, expertise and communication of science (8).

▼ VALORIZATION OF RESEARCH ▼



▼ PRODUCTION OF PUBLIC GOODS ▼



▼ CONCLUSION ▼

Since its very first experimental evaluation processes on this side, through its participatory-type methodological approach, ANVUR is reinforcing the institutionalization of third mission by triggering an interplay of cultural shifts, institutional rearrangements, and changes in the structure of incentives in Italian universities.

As also confirmed by results of the OECD-EC study (9) on the innovative potential of HEIs, universities in recent

years have developed a good awareness that third mission is more than tech transfer, stressing their cultural and social role and their contribution for Sustainable and Development Goals. Moreover, academic institutions are showing an "appetite" for third mission evaluation and a demand for performance-based incentives. They are also contributing *bottom-up* to the construction of the evaluation model proposing their good practices as standard.

▲ REFERENCES ▲

- Clark B. (1983) *The Higher Education System. Academic Organization in Cross-National Perspective*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Etzkowitz H. & Leydesdorff L. (1997) *Universities and the global knowledge economy: A triple helix of university-industry-government relations*. London: Pinter.
- Nedeva M. (2008) New tricks and old dogs? The 'third mission' and the re-production of the university. in Epstein D., Boden R., Deem R., Rizvi F., Wright S. (2008) *World Yearbook of Education Geographies of Knowledge, Geometries of Power: Framing the Future of Higher Education*.

- Molas-Gallart J., Salter A., Patel P., Scott A., & Duran X. (2002). Measuring third stream activities. Final report to the Russell Group of University, Brighton: UK, SPRU—Science and Technology Policy Research, University of Sussex, http://www2.lse.ac.uk/economicHistory/Research/CCPN/pdf/russell_report_thirdStream.pdf
- Geuna A., Muscio A. (2009) The governance of university knowledge transfer: A critical review of the literature. *Minerva*, 47, 93–114.
- Martin, B. (2011). The Research Excellence Framework and the 'impact agenda': are we creating a Frankenstein monster?,

- Research Evaluation*, 20, 3, 247–254.
- Göransson B., Maharajh R., Schmoch U. (2009) "New activities of universities in transfer and extension: multiple requirements and manifold solutions", *Science and Public Policy*, Vol. 36, No 2, 164.
- ANVUR (2015) Third Mission of Universities and Research Institutes. Evaluation Manual. Available only in Italian at <http://www.anvur.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Manuale%20di%20valutazione%20TM~.pdf>
- OECD-EC (forthcoming) HEInnovate Country Review Report Italy, <https://heinnovate.eu/en>