Research Impact in Catalonia:
what we know, where we are and where we are going

Jornada de Recerca, Coordinadora de Fundacions de Catalunya

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Jonathan Grant's conceptual overview

Research Impact Assessment (RIA) in Catalonia (retrospective)

Policy / strategy (ie system/macro)

- CERCA pilot: Research impact assessment scheme **(impact narratives)**
- ISCIII institutes' accreditation system **(indicators)**
- AQuAS: 'Central de Resultats' **(indicators and narratives)**

Research funders (ie Funding org./meso)

- Public funder: Health Department (PERIS) research program **(mix methods)**
- Private foundation: "la Caixa" Foundation **(indicators)**
- Private foundation: "La Marató de TV3" **(survey)**

Research institutions (ie universities/ centres/meso)

- Agriculture: IRTA/sector **(econometrics)**
- Health: Vall d'Hebron Hospital research institute **(impact narratives)**
- Epidemiology: ISGLOBAL Impact Assessment Group **(mix methods)**
- Universities (ACUP) / centres (AQuAS) **(input-output tables)**

Researchers (ie people/micro)

- Impact Prize: University Rovira i Virgili **(impact narratives)**

Research impact policy agenda in Catalonia (prospective/transformative)

Policy / strategy
(ie system/macro)

- RIACAT: Collaboration between research policy-makers (2018)
- Government of Catalonia. “Agreement on Knowledge Society” (2021)
- Gov. Catalonia new organigram: Two General Directions (2022)
- Evidence for policy
  - Evidence for health policy (AQuAS)
  - Evidence for scientific policy (AQuAS)
  - Evidence for education policy (Fundació Jaume Bofill)

Ecosystems
(ie system/meso)

- Ecosystems: “Shared agendas” in Bages county

Research institutions
(ie universities/meso)

- Institutions: IRSICaixa Living Lab

Individual competences
(ie people/micro)

- New competences for researchers: AQuAS / PERIS (7Cs)

Case 1. Resarch Impact Assessment by AQuAS

PERIS strategic program, Department of Health, Gov. of Catalonia, (2016-21 and 2021-27)

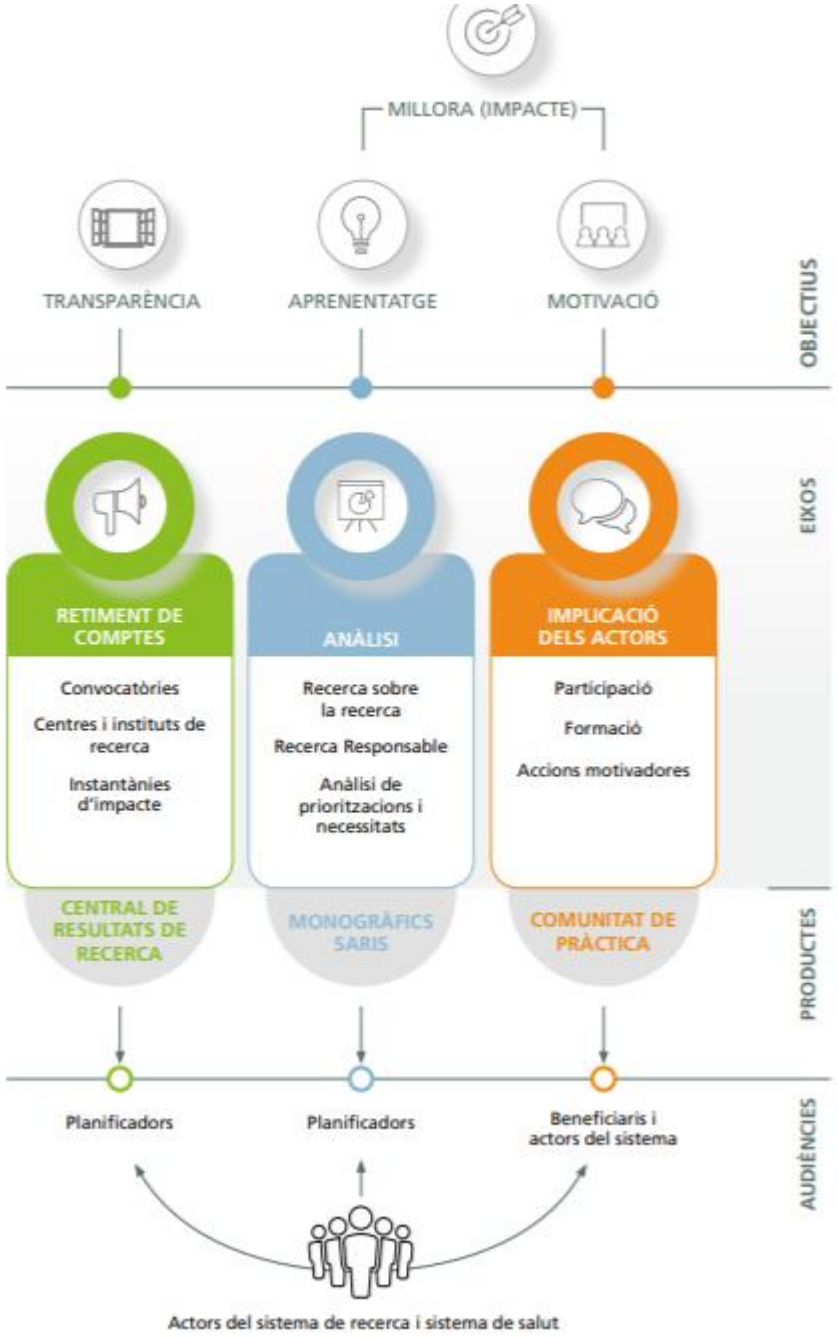
- 20 Health and biomedical research institutes (basic and clinical/traslational research)
- PERIS research commissioning. **20M€**
  - Nursing research and medical doctor's research (individuals)
  - Thematic programs (mental health, primary care)
  - Scientific talent (variety of programs)
  - Institutional support

Assessment System SARIS (ongoing)

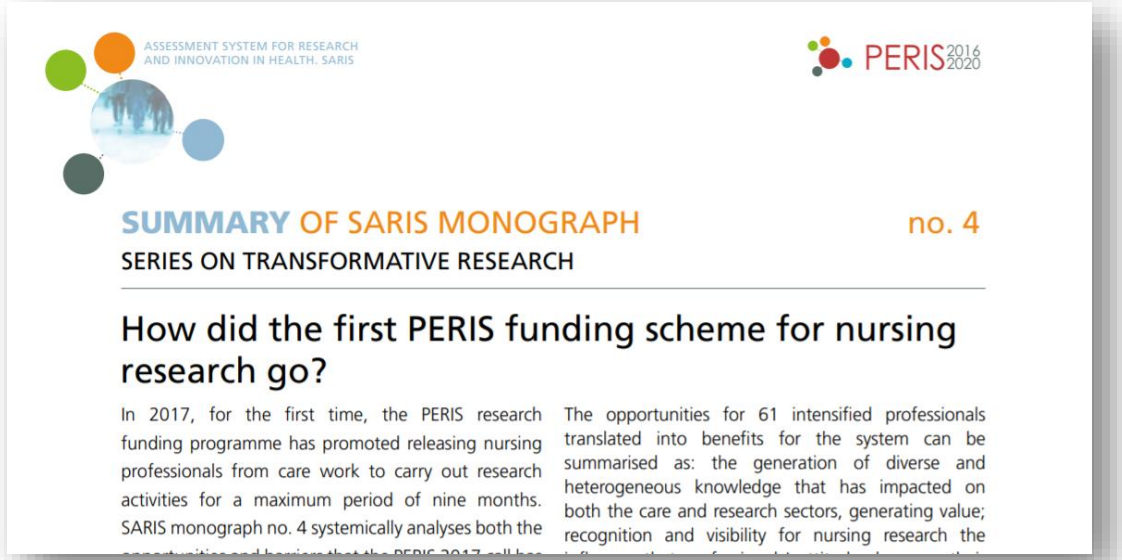
- Accountability (indicators, for policy-makers)
- Advocacy (impact narratives at centre level and program level)
- Analysis (lessons for the Department of Health)
- Engagement (grantees)
- Community of Practice (gender, patients, primary care)
- Transformation (commitment, responsibility, impact)

SISTEMA D'AVALUACIÓ DE LA RECERCA
I INNOVACIÓ EN SALUT. SARIS

Health Research Assessment System (SARIS)



SARIS example 1:
Impact assessment of PERIS Nursing Research program



ASSESSMENT SYSTEM FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN HEALTH. SARIS

PERIS 2016 2020

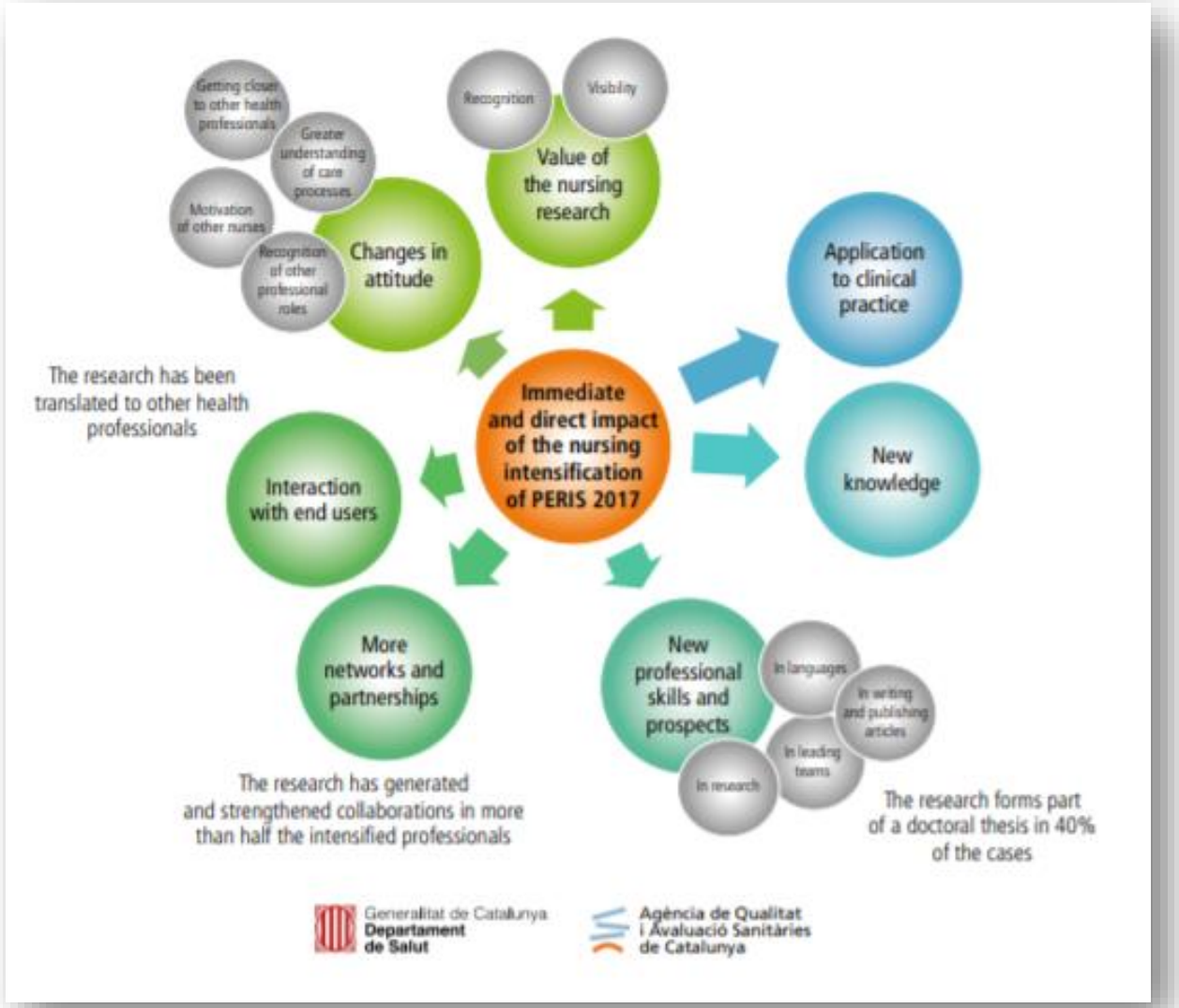
SUMMARY OF SARIS MONOGRAPH no. 4

SERIES ON TRANSFORMATIVE RESEARCH

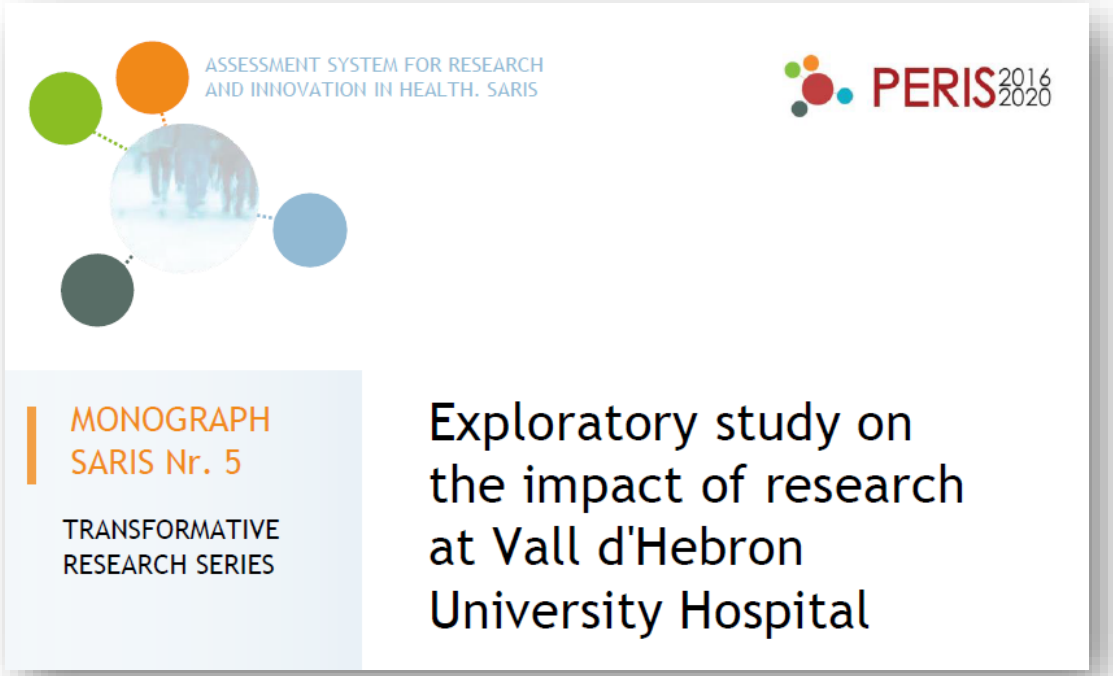
How did the first PERIS funding scheme for nursing research go?

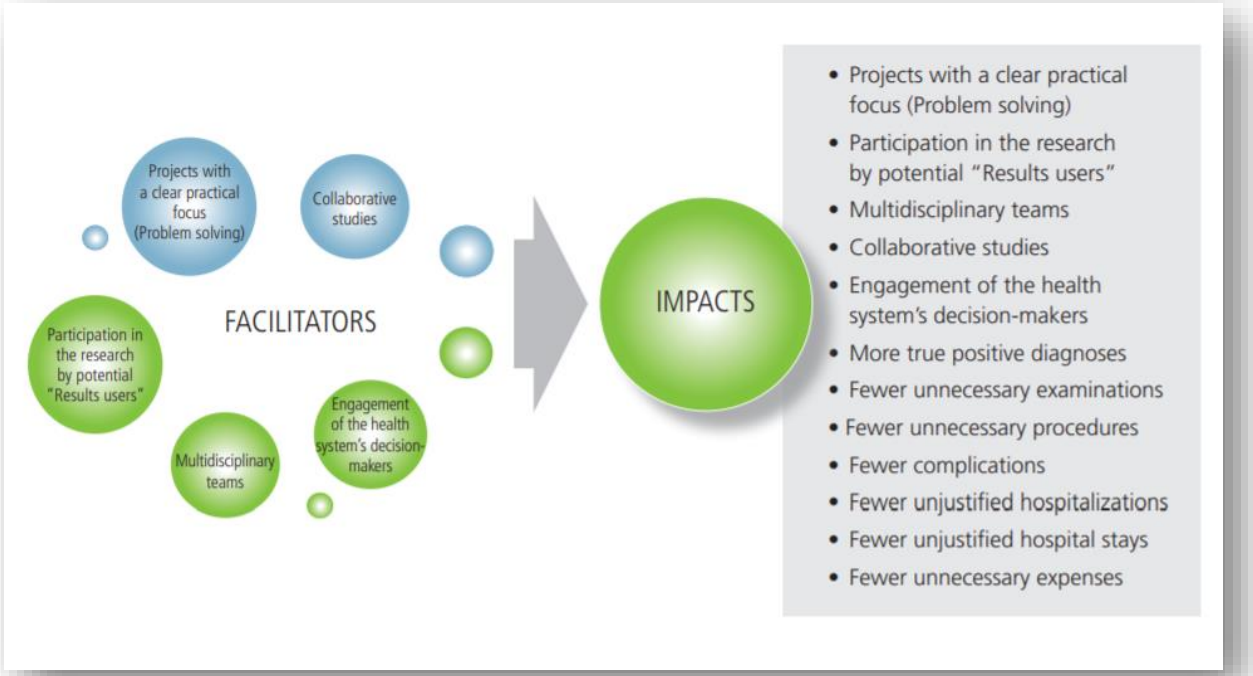
In 2017, for the first time, the PERIS research funding programme has promoted releasing nursing professionals from care work to carry out research activities for a maximum period of nine months. SARIS monograph no. 4 systemically analyses both the

The opportunities for 61 intensified professionals translated into benefits for the system can be summarised as: the generation of diverse and heterogeneous knowledge that has impacted on both the care and research sectors, generating value; recognition and visibility for nursing research the

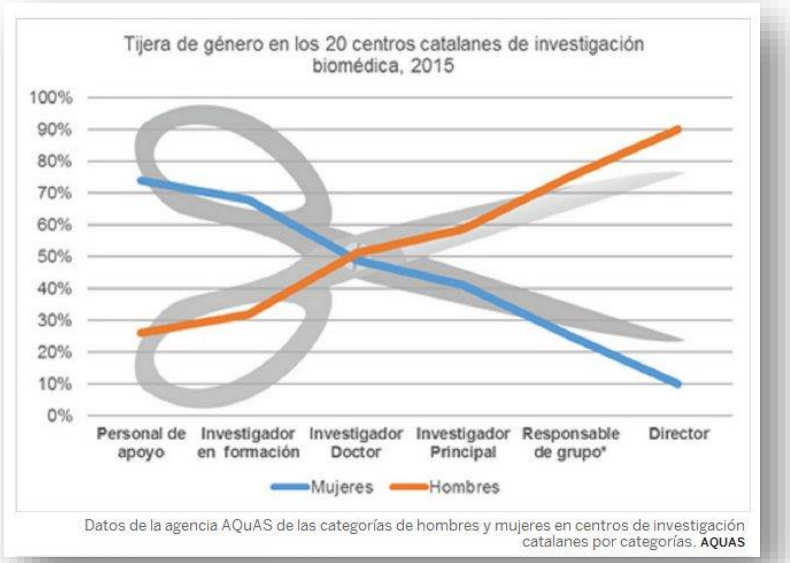


SARIS example 2:
Impact assessment of research from Vall d'Hebron Hospital

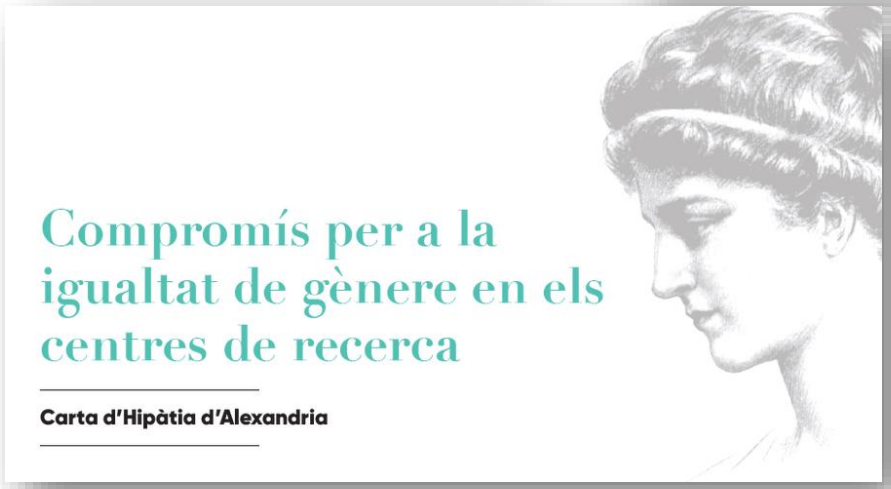




SARIS example 3:
Gender equality assessment and transformation



Summit for Gender Equality and Leadership, 2019



Agenda of the ongoing Community of Practice:

- Webminar on gender perspective
- Train the trainers' workshop
- Toolkit for introduction of gender perspective in research
- 2nd Summit for Gender Equality and Female Leadership

Case 2:
The RIACAT seminar

- Group of stakeholders from the public research system (policy-makers, managers, assessment agencies, communication, etc)
- RIACAT Seminar: 4-day combination of lectures and participative sessions in which an impact agenda was designed
- Created by DGR, **Francesc Subirada** with collaboration from AQuAS
- AQuAS is co-founder and co-organizer of the International School on Research Impact Assessment (ISRIA), run during 5 years in 4 continents. ISRIA is a training school for practitioners.
- Frequent leadership of the health research field in RIA, Open Science, RRI, etc, due to its dimension,

The International School
on Research Impact Assessment

Case 3: RIA journey of “la Caixa” Foundation

Context

- In 2021, “la Caixa” Foundation allocated circa 40 M € to promote **research** and **innovation** the biomedicine.
- 70% of the budget, allocated to **competitive calls** (CaixaResearch): :
  - Health research (2021): 22,1 M€ and 30 projects
  - Validate (2021)/Consolidate (2021): 1,4/2,1 M€ and 17/8 projects
- Characteristics of the competitive calls:
  - Centres based in Spain and Portugal
  - Thematic areas (health): oncology, neuroscience, infectious and cardiovascular
  - Two-steps assessment process: peers-review and panels (international)
  - Everything in English

Fundació "la Caixa"

RIA journey of “la Caixa” Foundation

Characteristics of the impact assessment model

- Based in an intra-mural participative process
  - Why measure impact?
  - How to measure impact?
- RIA model addresses the following scopes:
  - Accountability (Patronat): “Highlights”
  - Analysis (Directors and managers): ‘Quadres de comandament’ per programes
- Indicators expected to correlate with health impact:
  - Bibliometric impact
  - Clinical impact
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Open science
- Most indicators are **quantitative**, but currently considering to introduce **impact narratives**

Fundació "la Caixa"

RIA journey of “la Caixa” Foundation

How is the model assessed?

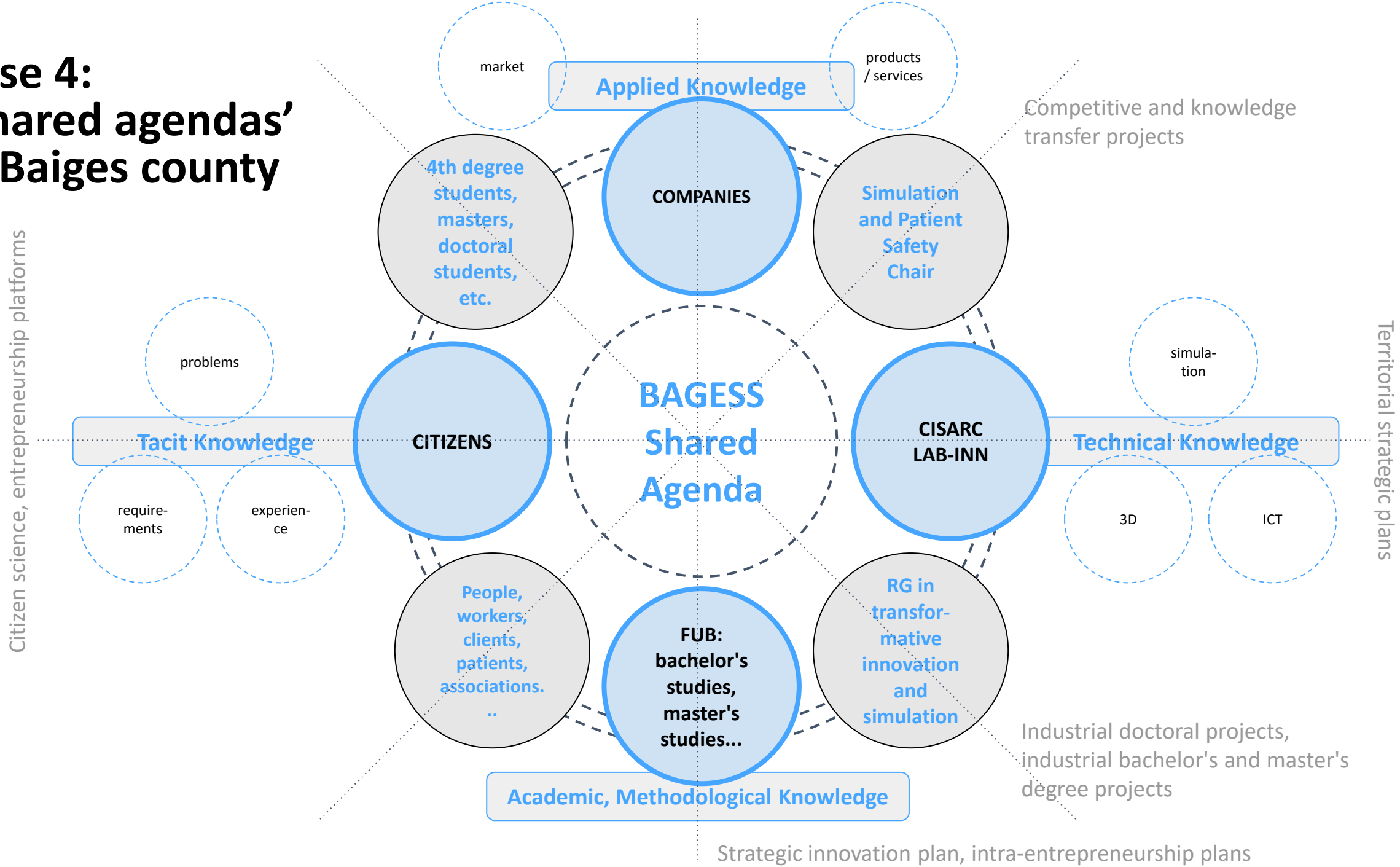
- Sources of **information**:
  - Minimize auto-reporting
  - Maximize automatic recollection from external databases
- Orientation to **give support** to researchers:
  - Training on “Output Management Plan” (better science)
  - Minimize administrative burden (more and better science)

Challenges

- Measuring “health impact”
- Alignment and coordination with international RIA experiences
- How to promote researcher’s co-responsibility with impact?
  - Ex-ante impact definition
  - Feed-back ex-post indicators
- Embed RIA findings and outcomes into program’ designs

Fundació ”la Caixa”

Case 4: ‘Shared agendas’ in Baiges county



Lessons learnt from the RIA experience in Catalonia (I)

Researchers:

- See a new challenge, and an opportunity to commit to the social contract between science and society

And yet:

- Limited knowledge about what is impact, how to fill an impact evaluation form and how to take co-responsibility.
- Most common mistake: confusion between “potentially impactful results” and “real impact/change/effect/transformation”
- Demand for training and guidance
- Often, researchers express confusion and sometimes resistance
- Yet, there was identification of “champions for change”, and identification of impacts the researchers were unaware of.

Lessons learnt from the RIA experience in Catalonia (II)

Centres:

- See an opportunity to demonstrate the value to society

and yet:

- Difficulties to identify intra-mural impact cases
- Disorientation when requested about their impact
- Demand for coordination and clarity on next steps from policy-level
- Demand for coordinated training and guidance to researchers, managers and third parties from the assessment agencies
- Concern about the workload of yet another evaluation

Lessons learnt from the RIA experience in Catalonia (III)

Assessment agents / policy makers:

- Opportunity to build a general message across the system
- Opportunity to understand why and how RIA can steer the system

and yet

- Methodological challenge
- Alignment with new assessment models (DORA)
- Diversity of initiatives at different levels
- Data collection / indicators – there are partial initiatives with important drawbacks
- Need to promote a coordinated federation of data collection system and indicators scoreboard, ideally in real-time
- Need to build capacity
- Need to articulate a coordinated action and simplify processes

Two promising avenues we are exploring

- Lessons from ‘shared agendas’ in ecosystems
  - Project funded with European funds, build around the concept of “missions”, “shared agendas” and “formative evaluation”
  - Instead of seeking systemic transformations (top-down), the strategy is to promote transformative ecosystems (bottom-up) from which develop, expand and escalate
  - Identify champions for change

- New competences
  - Researcher’s new competences
  - Impact professionals or agents /third space careers/ knowledge brokers or mobilizers /research sherpas

Thank you!