

Description of Activities

PhD Impact Sprint: Engaging, Communicating, and Measuring Impact

Three-day residential immersive workshop

The initiative aims to strengthen doctoral researchers' ability to translate research results into recognizable, communicable, and measurable impact. While many Italian universities offer training in transversal skills such as science communication and dissemination, these activities are often fragmented and not systematically linked to impact generation.

The two-day immersive workshop addresses this gap by connecting science communication with the development of impact pathways, in line with Horizon Europe. It provides doctoral candidates with tools to understand how dissemination, public engagement, and knowledge valorisation are integral to the research process and contribute to scientific, social, and economic impact.

The programme promotes a strategic view of communication—as a means to engage stakeholders and guide the use of research results—and aims to foster an integrated approach to designing and articulating research impact.

Proposed Teaching Modules and Laboratory Activities

Impact evaluation methodologies

Qualitative vs. quantitative approaches (and when to use them); Theory of Change; social and cultural impact indicators (not only economic ones).

Operational tools

Development of shared indicators; stakeholder mapping and engagement; data collection (surveys, interviews, narrative evidence); monitoring and reporting tools (e.g. models used by universities participating in APEnet).

Science communication and public engagement: principles of science communication

Differences between dissemination, communication, and public engagement; adapting messages to different audiences (policy makers, citizens, schools, media); impact storytelling.

Practical communication tools: public speaking, social media, and digital communication

Structuring an effective pitch; clarity and synthesis techniques; use of examples and storytelling; engaging non-academic audiences; translating academic content for social media (LinkedIn, X, Instagram); differences between platforms and communication styles; basic editorial planning for a research project; engagement metrics (and their limits as impact indicators).

Laboratory: designing and measuring impact

Participants, divided into groups, will choose (or be assigned) a project case. They will define impact objectives and relevant stakeholders; develop a mini Theory of Change by identifying 2–3 quantitative and 2–3 qualitative indicators; and propose data collection tools.

Final presentations and plenary discussion.

There is no participation fee for PhD candidates enrolled at the University of Pisa. Accommodation and meals during the residential programme are fully covered.