

2026

How to Generate Research Impact: A Framework and Checklist for Impact-Aware Information Systems Research

Jan vom Brocke
University of Münster

Katrin Bergener
University of Münster

Armin Stein
University of Münster

Sandro Franzoi
University of Münster

Jörg Becker
University of Münster

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aisel.aisnet.org/cais>

Recommended Citation

vom Brocke, J., Bergener, K., Stein, A., Franzoi, S., Becker, J., Grisold, T., Hein, A., Król, D., Ramos, I., Rosemann, M., Song, M., & Winter, R. (In press). How to Generate Research Impact: A Framework and Checklist for Impact-Aware Information Systems Research. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 58, pp-pp. Retrieved from <https://aisel.aisnet.org/cais/vol58/iss1/89>

This material is brought to you by the AIS Journals at AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). It has been accepted for inclusion in Communications of the Association for Information Systems by an authorized administrator of AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). For more information, please contact elibrary@aisnet.org.

How to Generate Research Impact: A Framework and Checklist for Impact-Aware Information Systems Research

Authors

Jan vom Brocke, Katrin Bergener, Armin Stein, Sandro Franzoi, Jörg Becker, Thomas Grisold, Andreas Hein, Dariusz Król, Isabel Ramos, Michael Rosemann, Minseok Song, and Robert Winter



Accepted Manuscript

How to Generate Research Impact: A Framework and Checklist for Impact-Aware Information Systems Research

Jan vom Brocke

University of Münster
0000-0002-0071-3719

Armin Stein

University of Münster
0000-0003-2854-3018

Jörg Becker

University of Münster
0000-0001-5690-439X

Andreas Hein

University of St. Gallen
0000-0001-9565-5840

Isabel Ramos

University of Minho
0000-0001-8035-4703

Minseok Song

Pohang University of Science and Technology
0000-0002-6813-8853

Katrin Bergener

University of Münster
0000-0002-1193-7208

Sandro Franzoi

University of Münster
0000-0002-6539-6515

Thomas Grisold

Vienna University of Business and Economics
0000-0002-6126-1488

Dariusz Król

Wroclaw University of Science and Technology
0000-0002-2715-6000

Michael Rosemann

Queensland University of Technology
0000-0003-3303-2896

Robert Winter

University of St. Gallen
0000-0001-9383-2276

Please cite this article as: vom Brocke, J., Bergener, K., Stein, A., Franzoi, S., Becker, J., Grisold, T., Hein, A., Król, D., Ramos, I., Rosemann, M., Song, M., & Winter, R. (In press). How to Generate Research Impact: A Framework and Checklist for Impact-Aware Information Systems Research. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*.

This is a PDF file of an unedited manuscript that has been accepted for publication in the *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*. We are providing this early version of the manuscript to allow for expedited dissemination to interested readers. The manuscript will undergo copyediting, typesetting, and review of the resulting proof before it is published in its final form. Please note that during the production process errors may be discovered, which could affect the content. All legal disclaimers that apply to the *Communications of the Association for Information Systems* pertain. For a definitive version of this work, please check for its appearance online at <http://aisel.aisnet.org/cais/>.



How to Generate Research Impact: A Framework and Checklist for Impact-Aware Information Systems Research

Jan vom Brocke

University of Münster
0000-0002-0071-3719

Armin Stein

University of Münster
0000-0003-2854-3018

Jörg Becker

University of Münster
0000-0001-5690-439X

Andreas Hein

University of St. Gallen
0000-0001-9565-5840

Isabel Ramos

University of Minho
0000-0001-8035-4703

Minseok Song

Pohang University of Science and Technology
0000-0002-6813-8853

Katrin Bergener

University of Münster
0000-0002-1193-7208

Sandro Franzoi

University of Münster
0000-0002-6539-6515

Thomas Grisold

Vienna University of Business and Economics
0000-0002-6126-1488

Dariusz Król

Wroclaw University of Science and Technology
0000-0002-2715-6000

Michael Rosemann

Queensland University of Technology
0000-0003-3303-2896

Robert Winter

University of St. Gallen
0000-0001-9383-2276

Abstract:

Research impact has emerged as a defining challenge for the Information Systems discipline. While bibliometric indicators remain prevalent, they capture only a fraction of the value Information Systems research generates for organizations, policy, and society. This panel report documents the outcomes of a structured workshop held at the ERCIS Annual Workshop 2025 in St. Gallen, Switzerland, in which 55 Information Systems scholars from across the globe collectively reflected on the nature, mechanisms, and future directions of research impact. Drawing on a World Café format with three thematic breakout sessions – covering past experiences of impact generation, current process practices, and forward-looking aspirations – the workshop surfaced rich, practitioner-grounded insights. Synthesizing these insights, we develop a research impact framework that maps six core impact themes – problem relevance & societal value, stakeholder engagement & co-creation, credible actionability, adaptiveness & learning, ethics & risk awareness, and sustainability & longevity – against the four phases of Benbya et al. (2026) impact framework: planning, delivering, measuring, and communicating. The matrix serves as a practical self-assessment tool for Information Systems researchers seeking to design more impactful research. Our findings point to the importance of sustained stakeholder partnerships, problem-driven research design, and institutional ecosystems that reward societal relevance alongside academic rigor.

Keywords: Research Impact, Information Systems, Societal Relevance, Impact Framework, Stakeholder Engagement, Panel Report.

1 Introduction

The question of what constitutes meaningful research impact has moved from the margins to the center of academic discourse. Across disciplines, universities, funding bodies, and professional associations are asking not only how much research is produced, but what difference it makes for organizations, for policy, and for society at large. For the Information Systems discipline, this question carries particular urgency and particular promise. As a field concerned with digital technologies in organizational and societal contexts, Information Systems research is uniquely positioned to generate impact that is both academically rigorous and broadly significant.

Yet, realizing this potential remains challenging. Dominant academic evaluation systems continue to reward publications in high-ranking journals and citation-based metrics. While these indicators capture scholarly influence, they provide only limited insights into whether research shapes organizational practice, informs policy, or improves lives. In response, leading Information Systems scholars and editorial initiatives have called for a broader and more inclusive conception of impact; one that extends beyond bibliometric indicators to encompass contributions to organizations, communities, and the public good (Benbya et al., 2026; Nunamaker et al., 2017; Petter et al., 2021). Institutional developments, such as the AACSB's impact standards and initiatives like the AIS Impact Award Committee, further underscore a growing recognition that impact must be actively cultivated rather than assumed as a byproduct of academic excellence.

This panel report responds to these calls by documenting and synthesizing insights from a structured workshop on research impact conducted within the European Research Center for Information Systems (ERCIS) network (www.ercis.org). The workshop brought together 55 Information Systems researchers – including faculty, post-doctoral researchers, and doctoral students from Europe, Asia, and the Asia-Pacific region – for a three-hour World Café session at the ERCIS Annual Workshop in St. Gallen, Switzerland, in July 2025. Through structured discussions across three thematic tables addressing past, present, and future dimensions of impact, participants collectively generated a rich set of practice-informed insights into how Information Systems research creates – and can be designed to create – meaningful impact beyond academia.

Building on Benbya et al.'s (2026) conceptual framework, which organizes impact-generating activities into four phases (planning, delivering, measuring, and communicating), this report makes two primary contributions. First, it surfaces recurring themes and best practices from the lived experiences of Information Systems researchers who have generated impact across diverse organizational, national, and disciplinary contexts. Second, it proposes a research impact framework that maps six core impact themes against Benbya et al.'s (2026) four phases, offering a structured self-assessment tool to support the design of more impactful information systems research.

The remainder of this report is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the conceptual background on Information Systems research impact. Section 3 describes the workshop methodology and the research design. Section 4 presents the empirical findings across the three breakout sessions, including the derived Research Impact Checklist. Section 5 discusses its implications and concludes with a forward-looking impact agenda for Information Systems research.

2 Background

The concept of research impact has gained increasing prominence across scientific disciplines as universities, funding agencies, and professional associations place growing emphasis on contributions beyond scholarly knowledge production. In the information systems discipline, this development resonates strongly with the field's long-standing sociotechnical orientation and its engagement with digital technologies as organizational, economic, and societal infrastructures. Traditionally, academic impact in Information Systems has been assessed primarily through bibliometric indicators such as publications in leading journals, citation counts, and journal rankings. While these metrics remain central for evaluating scholarly influence, recent Information Systems discourse has increasingly emphasized that they capture only one dimension of the broader impact that Information Systems research may generate (Benbya et al., 2026).

Within the Information Systems field, impact is now widely understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing effects on academia, business and organizations, public policy, and society at large. Early Information Systems work focused primarily on the organizational and individual benefits of information systems, emphasizing capabilities, practices, or artefacts (e.g., Gable et al., 2008). More recent

perspectives explicitly broaden this scope, highlighting that Information Systems phenomena are deeply entangled with their environment. Here, Nunamaker et al., (2017) state that “many definitions of Information Systems limit its scope to IT support for organizational managers. Yet managers are only a fraction of those served by information systems (...) [instead] Information systems involve many technological, social, political, psychological, and economic concerns” (p. 337). This broader conceptualization aligns with institutional developments such as the AIS Impact Award and dedicated ICIS and journal initiatives that recognize high-impact research beyond academic publication outputs (Petter et al., 2021).

A recently introduced analytical distinction differentiates between academic, business, and societal impact (Benbya et al., 2026). Academic impact refers to the contribution of Information Systems research to theory development, methodological innovation, and cumulative scientific knowledge, typically operationalized through journal quality, citation-based metrics, and educational integration. In contrast, the operationalization of business and societal impact relies on more heterogeneous indicators, such as the uptake of research in organizational practices and public policy, commercialization activities, media visibility, stakeholder engagement, and demonstrable improvements in well-being or environmental outcomes (Benbya et al., 2026; Galletta et al., 2019). Prior Information Systems work further emphasizes that impact often unfolds over extended time horizons and through complex causal chains, making direct attribution difficult. As a result, recent discussions distinguish between leading indicators of potential impact (e.g., early stakeholder engagement, translational activities, and prototype development) and lagging indicators of realized impact (e.g., large-scale adoption, regulatory change, or societal transformation) (Petter et al., 2021). Complementing this multidimensional view, Pan & Pee, (2020) reframe impact through the notion of use, proposing a 3U framework that distinguishes three cumulative forms of impactful research output: usable research (findings translated into a practically applicable form and disseminated), in-use research (outputs adopted and appropriated by practitioners), and useful research (outputs producing transformational, observable change on aspects beneficiaries seek to improve). By emphasising that practice impact accumulates progressively rather than only materialising at the end of a long pathway to impact, the 3U framework anticipates the leading-versus-lagging indicator distinction and reinforces the view that users are co-producers, not passive recipients, of impact. Building on this multidimensional understanding, Benbya et al. (2026) further conceptualize Information Systems research impact as an emergent process that unfolds across four interrelated activities: planning for impact, delivering impact, measuring impact, and communicating impact. Their conceptual framework and guidelines for research impact design are depicted in Figure 1.

Benbya et al. (2026) describe the four activities as follows. Planning for impact requires researchers to make explicit, upfront choices about the real-world problem they address, the stakeholders they intend to serve, and the kind of change they aim to bring about – treating impact as a design goal from the outset rather than a hoped-for by-product. This includes identifying who is affected by the problem, articulating why solving it matters, and specifying what success would look like in terms that go beyond citation counts. Delivering impact encompasses the activities through which research outputs are translated into artefacts, practices, or knowledge that intended users can actually apply: co-creation with practitioners, iterative prototyping, the provision of training and implementation support, and the sustained engagement needed to ensure that outputs are not only produced but adopted. Measuring impact involves systematically collecting and evaluating evidence that the intended change is materialising – drawing on quantitative performance indicators, qualitative stakeholder assessments, and triangulation across multiple data sources – while remaining open to unintended consequences, failure signals, and the long-time horizons over which societal effects often unfold. Communicating impact concerns the deliberate crafting and dissemination of research contributions in forms and through channels that reach beyond the academic community, so that practitioners, policymakers, and the public can understand, trust, and act on the findings. Together, these four activities constitute an emergent, non-linear process: researchers may cycle between them, revisit earlier phases in light of new evidence, and find that the boundaries between planning, delivering, measuring, and communicating are often blurred in practice (Benbya et al., 2026).

Against this conceptual background, the following section describes the workshop setting and research design through which our collective impact insights were generated, outlining how leading Information Systems scholars jointly reflected on the nature, mechanisms, and future directions of impact within the field.

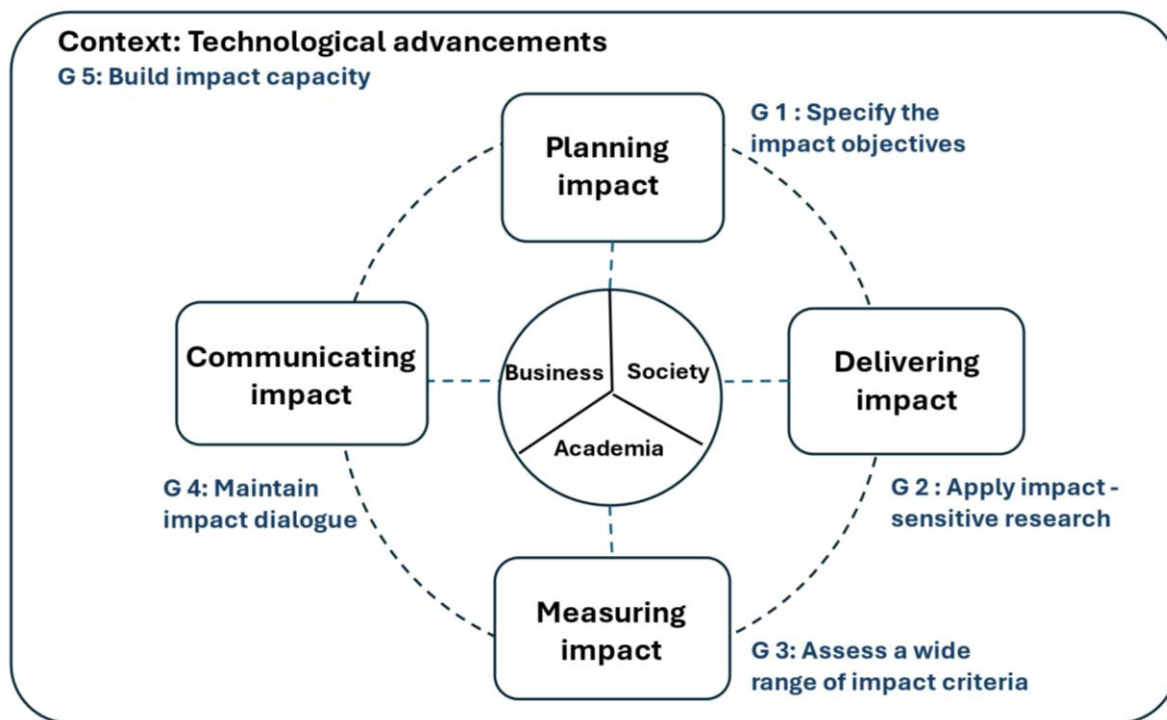


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework and Guidelines for Research Impact Design.
(Source: Benbya et al. (2026, p. 351))

3 Research Design – A Multi-Stage Collective Inquiry

This study was conducted in the context of the ERCIS Annual Workshop in St. Gallen, Switzerland using a World Café format, complemented by preceding and follow-up research phases. Rather than treating the workshop as a stand-alone data collection exercise, we designed the study as an iterative, collaborative inquiry in which insights were systematically developed, refined, and validated through a series of structured co-creation rounds. The overall process unfolded across six phases, summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Design Across Six Phases

Phase	Key activities	Output	Participants
1 – Literature preparation	Structured review of Information Systems impact literature; synthesis of international definitions and frameworks; development of workshop introduction	Conceptual foundation; workshop slides and moderator materials	Core team (4)
2 – Workshop planning	Design of World Café format; formulation of table questions; moderator briefing; logistics	Workshop agenda; table briefs; participant invitations	Core team (4)
3 – World Café workshop	Three-hour structured discussion across three thematic tables (St. Gallen, July 2025); plenary synthesis	Moderated table notes; themes and exemplary cases	Information Systems researchers (55)
4 – Data capture and initial synthesis	Transcription of workshop notes; thematic sense-making; development of 28 Research Impact Checklist questions	28 draft Research Impact Checklist questions structured according to Benbya et al. (2026) phases	Core team (4)
5 – Distributed co-creation	Circulation to all co-authors; invitation to edit, merge, and supplement; consolidation; identification of cross-cutting themes	40 Research Impact Checklist questions; six cross-cutting themes identified	All co-authors (12)

Table 1. Research Design Across Six Phases

Phase	Key activities	Output	Participants
6 – Matrix development and member checking	Working session to define six themes and map against four phases; sharing with co-authors and participants for evaluation	Research Impact Framework (6 × 4); member-checked and finalised	All co-authors (12)

This study was motivated by a simple observation: while research impact is increasingly emphasised in the Information Systems field – by journals (Benbya et al., 2026), professional associations (Petter et al., 2021), accreditation bodies (Rosemann et al., 2025), and scholars (Nunamaker et al., 2017) – there is still a gap between these expectations and researchers' ability to operationalize impact in practice. Against this background, the first phase of our study involved a structured review of the existing literature on Information Systems research impact. This review integrated definitions and frameworks from international policy and funding bodies, including the OECD Development Co-operation Report 2010 (OECD, 2010), the Arts and Humanities Research Council 2010 (AHRC, 2010), Research Councils UK 2011 (RCUK, 2012), and the Research Excellence Framework 2011 (REF, 2011), as well as IS-specific frameworks (Benbya et al., 2026; Nunamaker et al., 2017; Rosemann et al., 2025). The resulting synthesis informed the development of workshop materials and a common vocabulary of impact. This included a typology of impact types spanning academic, educational, organisational, economic, technological, entrepreneurial, regulatory, communal, and environmental domains, as identified by Rosemann et al. (2025) in collaboration with the AIS Impact Award Committee. We also drew on a three-dimensional impact model distinguishing Impact for Academia, Impact for Business, and Impact for Society (Benbya et al., 2026).

In a second phase, the core team designed the workshop. This included developing the World Café format, formulating guiding questions for each thematic table, conducting moderator briefings, and coordinating logistics. The three thematic tables were designed to generate complementary layers of insight across a temporal arc: the first table – Impact in the Past – invited participants to reflect on concrete projects that had generated organisational or societal impact and to identify recurring success factors; the second table – The Process of Impact Generation – examined the strategies, decisions, and practices embedded in the research lifecycle that support or hinder impact; the third table – The Future of Impact – challenged participants to formulate a forward-looking shared vision for Information Systems research impact, framed deliberately in the spirit of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The third phase consisted of the World Café workshop, held during the ERCIS Annual Workshop (7–9 July 2025) in St. Gallen, Switzerland. The workshop began with a plenary introduction that established the conceptual background, drawing on definitions of research impact from multiple international frameworks, and illustrated the breadth of Information Systems research impact through concrete examples: the racial discrimination study by Edelman et al. (2017), whose findings prompted Airbnb to announce platform policy changes on the day the paper was accepted; the consumer privacy research by Whitley & Pujadas (2018), which contributed to FCA regulatory revision benefiting over five million UK banking customers; and the DHIS2 open-source health data platform developed by Braa and Hedberg (Braa & Hedberg, 2002), now adopted in over 114 countries and recognised with the AIS Impact Award 2023. Participants were also introduced to the Benbya et al. (2026) framework of planning, delivering, measuring, and communicating impact, which served as the structural backbone for subsequent phases of the study.

The three-hour session involved 55 Information Systems researchers from multiple countries across Europe, Asia, and the Asia-Pacific region – a deliberately international sample intended to ensure that insights were not confined to any single institutional or cultural context. Participants included faculty, post-doctoral researchers, and doctoral students. Groups rotated through the three thematic tables, with each discussion guided by moderators who documented key findings in real time. The session concluded with a plenary synthesis. Table 2 provides an overview of participants by country, region, and seniority.

Table 2. Workshop Participants by Country, Region, and Seniority

Country	Region	Seniority	Participants
Australia	Queensland	Professor	1
Austria	Vienna	Professor	1
Belgium	Namur	Professor	1
Finland	Turku	Professor	1
France	Paris	Professor	1
Germany	Heidelberg	Professor	1
	Münster	Professor	3
		Post-doctoral researcher	2
		PhD Student	2
	Paderborn	Professor	2
	Siegen	Professor	1
PhD Student		2	
Hungary	Budapest	Professor	1
		Post-doctoral researcher	2
		PhD Student	1
Italy	Chieta	Professor	1
	Rome	Professor	1
Liechtenstein	Vaduz	Professor	1
		Post-doctoral researcher	1
Lithuania	Kaunas	Professor	1
		Post-doctoral researcher	1
New Zealand	Auckland	Post-doctoral researcher	1
Norway	Kristiansand	Professor	2
Poland	Wrocław	Professor	1
Portugal	Minho	Professor	2
Republic of Korea	Pohang	Professor	1
		PhD Student	1
Spain	Madrid	Professor	1
	Sevilla	Professor	2
Sweden	Lulea	Professor	1
Switzerland	St. Gallen	Professor	7
		Post-doctoral researcher	2
		PhD Student	6
		Total:	55

In a fourth phase, the workshop documentation was transcribed and synthesised by the core research team. Through collective sense-making among the co-authors, an initial set of 28 Research Impact Checklist questions was developed at a working session at the ERCIS headquarters in Münster (see Appendix A). These questions were structured according to the four phases of the Benbya et al. (2026) framework (Planning, Delivering, Measuring, and Communicating) to reflect the temporal logic of impact-generating research. This structure deliberately situates the questions within an established Information Systems framework rather than treating impact as a post-hoc consideration.

In a fifth phase, the 28 draft questions were circulated to all co-authors at distributed ERCIS partner institutions, who were invited to edit, merge, and supplement the list. The resulting contributions were consolidated into a refined set of 40 Research Impact Checklist questions, retaining the four-phase structure. The full question list is reproduced in the Appendix. During this consolidation process, the co-authoring team observed that several questions targeted concerns that manifested consistently across multiple phases rather than being specific to any single one, e.g. concerns relating to stakeholder engagement, ethical responsibility, long-term sustainability, and similar cross-cutting themes.

This observation motivated a sixth and final phase, in which a further working session was convened to identify these cross-cutting aspects systematically. Six impact themes were identified and defined (Problem Relevance & Societal Value, Stakeholder Engagement & Co-Creation, Credible Actionability, Adaptiveness & Learning, Ethics & Risk Awareness, and Sustainability & Longevity) and mapped against the four Benbya et al. (2026) phases to produce the Research Impact Framework introduced in Section 4. The matrix was subsequently shared with all co-authors and with the broader group of the ERCIS Annual workshop participants for member checking. Respondents confirmed its practical utility, particularly for the planning, delivery, and communication of impact-oriented research, and minor refinements were incorporated before finalising the Research Impact Framework.

4 Results – Insights from Information Systems Researchers on Impact

The three World Café breakout sessions generated a rich and diverse set of research practitioner insights that provide the empirical foundation for the Research Impact Framework and the Research Impact Checklist presented in this section.

Across the “Past table”, participants reflected on concrete projects that had generated impact beyond academia. A consistent finding was that impact rarely arrives by accident: it typically emerged through sustained engagement with practice partners, through artefacts that addressed a genuine organisational or societal need, and through trust-based relationships that allowed findings to be translated into action over time. Much of this impact remained hidden from conventional metrics – surfacing only when former students applied research insights in industry, or when tools were adopted and adapted without the research team being notified.

The “Process table” surfaced the mechanisms that underpin impact generation. Participants consistently emphasised that impact is an emergent, iterative process rather than a linear one. The “butterfly model” articulated during the session captured this well: research sits at the intersection of academia and practice, drawing inputs from both worlds and returning outputs to both. Participants identified ongoing stakeholder interaction, not one-off consultation, as the single most important process factor, alongside problem-driven research design and institutional support structures that recognise and reward societal relevance alongside academic rigour.

The “Perspectives table” looked ahead. Participants articulated a shared aspiration for Information Systems research that is proactive rather than reactive: identifying societal challenges early, producing outputs that can be acted upon quickly, and leveraging transnational networks such as ERCIS as credible voices in policy and industry conversations. These forward-looking insights directly informed the Impact Agenda presented in the Conclusion. Taken together, the three sessions provided the empirical foundation for the two practical contributions developed below: the Research Impact Framework and the Research Impact Checklist.

4.1 The Research Impact Framework

When consolidating the results from the World Café, it became evident that many of the experiences cluster around a handful of overarching themes that cut across the four phases introduced by Benbya et al. (2026). Thus, grounded in the data, we identified six dedicated themes, namely Problem Relevance & Societal Value (PR), Stakeholder Engagement & Co Creation (SE), Credible Actionability (CA), Adaptiveness & Learning (AL), Ethics, Responsibility & Risk Awareness (ER), and Sustainability, Embedding & Longevity (SL). For each of the phases, we defined a core question, as well as a unifying intent:

1. **Problem Relevance & Societal Value (PR):** Are we working on the right real-world problem, and does it matter? Researchers must anchor their work in genuine real-world problems, identify who is affected, explain why the problem matters, and continuously safeguard relevance as contexts evolve.
2. **Stakeholder Engagement & Co-Creation (SE):** Who is involved in the research, how, and with what influence? Researchers should explicitly map all relevant stakeholders, engage them throughout the project, incorporate their feedback on an ongoing basis, and foster ownership that extends beyond the research team.
3. **Credible Actionability (CA):** How can we design research outputs that are both ready-to-use and demonstrably trustworthy, so that intended users can act on them with confidence? Design artefacts (methods, prototypes, policies, decision-support tools, etc.) that are directly linked to measurable outcomes and embed provenance information. Evidence should be built into the artefact, accompanied by clear documentation, training, and support that answers the user’s “Will this work for me?” question. Accountability is achieved by defining, collecting, and publicly exposing the metrics that judge impact, and by providing mechanisms for external audit or peer review.
4. **Adaptiveness & Learning (AL):** How do we learn, adjust, and respond over time? Continuous reflection on goals, responsiveness to feedback, and sensitivity to changing contexts are required. Because research trajectories are non-linear, the team must remain open to unintended effects and emergent opportunities.

5. **Ethics, Responsibility & Risk Awareness (ER):** What could go wrong, for whom, and how do we act responsibly? Anticipating negative or unintended consequences and embedding ethical, legal, and organisational safeguards must become part of the research DNA. This is especially salient in fast-moving domains such as AI, where rapid opportunity creation can outpace responsible-innovation practices.
6. **Sustainability, Embedding & Longevity (SL):** Solutions should be conceived with institutionalisation and long-term maintenance in mind, not only at delivery but also during development. Researchers must consider scaling requirements and mechanisms that embed the contribution into practice, thereby moving beyond one-off effects.

The six themes are not sequential stages but persistent lenses that apply throughout the entire research lifecycle. Their salience shifts depending on where a project stands: some themes demand intensive attention during Planning and recede to a maintenance role later; others become acute only when Delivering or Measuring begins. What matters is not assigning weights to cells but ensuring that no theme is entirely absent from a researcher's thinking at any phase. The following sub-sections examine each theme and, in turn, trace how it manifests across the four phases, drawing on concrete examples from the workshop.

Table 3 presents the Research Impact Framework in condensed form. Each cell summarises the focal question and key activities that arise at the intersection of a given theme and phase. Researchers can use this as a quick-reference guide during project planning, team reflection sessions, or doctoral training, consulting the fuller discussion above for elaboration and examples.

Table 3. The Research Impact Framework

Theme	Planning (P)	Delivering (D)	Measuring (M)	Communicating (C)
Problem Relevance & Societal Value (PR)	Have I clearly identified the real-world problem, who is affected, and why it matters for society or organisations – and does this justify the research?	Is the solution I am building still addressing the original problem as defined, or has the problem context shifted in ways that require me to revisit my framing?	Is there evidence that the intended societal or organisational benefits are actually materialising for the people the research was meant to help?	Am I framing my findings in terms of the societal challenge they address, so that non-academic audiences can immediately understand their relevance?
Stakeholder Engagement & Co-Creation (SE)	Have I mapped all relevant stakeholders, planned how to engage them throughout the project, and built their perspectives into the research design from the outset?	Am I maintaining ongoing, two-way engagement with stakeholders – not just informing them, but actively incorporating their feedback into the artefacts I am building?	Am I triangulating my impact evidence with stakeholder-reported outcomes, and can I show that co-creation actually shaped the final outputs?	Am I using the right channels and intermediaries to reach each stakeholder group, and have I built in mechanisms for them to respond and engage further?
Credible Actionability (CA)	Have I specified what action possibilities the research will enable, what success looks like from the user's perspective, and what evidence will demonstrate that it works?	Are the artefacts I am producing – tools, guidelines, prototypes, frameworks – genuinely ready to use, and do they come with documentation that answers "will this work for me"?	Do I have rigorous, independently verifiable evidence – KPIs, validation data, audit trails – that the artefact delivers what I claimed it would?	Am I packaging the evidence in forms each audience actually trusts – case studies for practitioners, dashboards for managers, methods sections for reviewers?
Adaptiveness & Learning (AL)	Have I framed my success and failure criteria as testable hypotheses, and built enough flexibility into the project plan to pivot if early findings	Am I actively monitoring for unexpected findings, environmental changes, or emerging opportunities – and am I willing to adjust	Are my KPIs being reviewed and updated as the project evolves, and am I using measurement results to drive concrete improvements rather	Am I collecting structured feedback on how my research is received and using it to improve future communication and,

Table 3. The Research Impact Framework

Theme	Planning (P)	Delivering (D)	Measuring (M)	Communicating (C)
	challenge my assumptions?	the research direction when evidence warrants it?	than just to report outcomes?	where relevant, the research itself?
Ethics, Responsibility & Risk Awareness (ER)	Have I systematically identified who could be negatively affected by my research, what risks it carries, and what safeguards I will put in place – before the project begins?	Am I actively monitoring for unintended negative effects during implementation, and do I have mechanisms to detect, document, and respond to harm if it occurs?	Am I tracking failure indicators and potential harms with the same rigour as success metrics, and am I prepared to report negative findings transparently?	Am I being honest about the limitations, boundary conditions, and risks of my research – and resisting pressure to overclaim impact in ways that could mislead users?
Sustainability, Embedding & Longevity (SL)	Have I identified who will maintain and sustain the research outputs after the project ends, and have I allocated resources for post-project support from the start?	Am I transferring knowledge and ownership to practitioners – through training, documentation, and capacity-building – so that use can continue without the research team?	Is there evidence that the artefact is being used without prompting from the research team, and is it being embedded into standard procedures or institutional routines?	Am I engaging intermediaries – professional bodies, policy networks, educators – who can carry the research into communities and contexts beyond my direct reach?

The Research Impact Framework (Table 3) organises the six impact themes introduced above against the four phases of the Benbya et al. (2026) impact framework. Its purpose is not to rank or score research projects but to serve as a structured reflective instrument: by walking through each row and column, researchers can surface which dimensions of impact are being actively addressed in their work and which may be underserved. The matrix is deliberately qualitative. Each cell describes the characteristic questions, activities, and challenges that arise when a given theme intersects with a given phase, illustrated by concrete examples drawn from the workshop discussions. Researchers are encouraged to treat it as a living reference – consulting it at the start of a project, revisiting it at key milestones, and using it to guide team conversations about impact strategy.

The following paragraphs walk through each row of the Research Impact Framework – one per theme – explaining how the theme manifests across the four phases and what it demands of researchers in practice.

4.1.1 Problem Relevance and Societal Value

Problem Relevance and Societal Value (PR) is the foundational theme of the Research Impact Framework: it asks whether a project is anchored in a genuine real-world problem and whether solving it will make a difference to identifiable people or organisations. During the Planning phase, PR is constitutive – it is what justifies the entire research endeavour. Researchers must articulate not only what problem they are studying but who experiences it, how it manifests, and why it matters at a societal level. One workshop participant described launching a research programme on algorithmic hiring after noticing a pattern of systematically disadvantaged applicants in a public-sector recruitment process: the problem was concrete, the affected population identifiable, and the societal stakes clear from the outset.

During Delivering, PR requires researchers to monitor whether the original problem framing still holds. Contexts shift: organisations restructure, regulations change, technology landscapes evolve. A project on digital supply-chain transparency that begins during a period of stable trade relationships may need to revisit its relevance assumptions mid-stream if geopolitical disruptions alter the problem significantly. During Measuring, PR surfaces in the question of whether the intended societal benefits are actually materialising – not only whether the artefact works technically, but whether it is reaching those who were supposed to benefit. During Communicating, PR shapes how findings are framed for non-academic audiences: situating results within current societal debates, connecting them to policy conversations, or illustrating them with accessible real-world examples all serve to translate scholarly contributions into publicly legible value.

4.1.2 Stakeholder Engagement and Co-Creation

Stakeholder Engagement and Co-Creation (SE) concerns who is involved in the research, in what capacity, and with what degree of influence over design choices and outputs. The workshop discussions consistently identified sustained stakeholder relationships – rather than one-off consultations – as a key differentiator between research that generates lasting impact and research that does not. During Planning, SE means mapping the full ecosystem of relevant actors: not only the primary beneficiaries of the research but also gatekeepers, intermediaries, and potential opponents. A team studying electronic health record adoption, for example, would need to map clinicians, administrators, patients, IT vendors, and regulators as distinct stakeholder groups, each with different needs and degrees of influence.

During Delivering, SE becomes the engine of co-creation: iterative feedback loops, joint design workshops, and embedded researcher arrangements allow practitioners to shape artefacts in real time, increasing the likelihood of adoption. Several participants described formal advisory boards and regular practitioner review sessions as essential infrastructure for this phase. During Measuring, SE informs triangulation: impact assessments gain credibility when they incorporate practitioner-reported outcomes alongside researcher-defined metrics. During Communicating, SE is essentially synonymous with the communication strategy itself – choosing the right channels, spokespersons, and narrative framings to reach each stakeholder group, and building in mechanisms for feedback so that the communication act itself becomes another touchpoint for engagement.

4.1.3 Credible Actionability

Credible Actionability (CA) addresses a central challenge in translational research: producing outputs that intended users can not only understand but act on with confidence. An artefact that is theoretically sound but practically inaccessible – whether because it is hidden behind a journal paywall, expressed in impenetrable technical language, or requires capabilities that practitioners do not have – will generate little impact regardless of its scholarly quality. During Planning, CA means defining from the outset what action possibilities the research is intended to enable, and what success and failure would look like from the perspective of the user. A research team developing a decision-support tool for municipal climate adaptation, for instance, would need to specify early which decisions the tool is meant to support, who will operate it, and what evidence would satisfy a sceptical city planner. This resonates with Pan & Pee's (2020) 3U framework, which argues that research outputs must first be rendered usable (i.e., translated into forms practitioners can actually apply) before they can be put in use or prove useful; without usability, downstream impact rarely materialises.

During Delivering, CA is realised through the design of concrete artefacts – prototypes, guidelines, frameworks, policy briefs, or software tools – that embed provenance information and are accompanied by clear documentation. During Measuring, CA is the primary concern: the central task is collecting evidence that the artefact works as intended, through KPI monitoring, usability validation, audit trails, and independent review. During Communicating, CA shapes how evidence is packaged for different audiences – practitioners respond to case studies and dashboards; policymakers to impact summaries; academics to methodology sections – so that each group encounters the form of evidence most likely to persuade them to act.

4.1.4 Adaptiveness and Learning

Adaptiveness and Learning (AL) recognises that research trajectories are rarely linear. Problems turn out to be different from what was initially understood; stakeholder needs shift; promising artefacts encounter unexpected implementation barriers; new opportunities emerge that were not anticipated at the outset. Impact-aware research builds in mechanisms for detecting and responding to these shifts rather than treating the original plan as inviolable. During Planning, AL is expressed in the way success and failure criteria are framed – not as fixed targets but as hypotheses to be tested and revised. Anticipating constraints, identifying early warning signals, and building slack into timelines all reflect an adaptive orientation.

During Delivering, AL is the engine of iterative development: monitoring progress, responding to environmental changes, and pivoting the research design when evidence warrants. One participant described abandoning a planned randomised rollout of a process-mining tool after early piloting revealed that the organisational context made random assignment practically and ethically unfeasible; the team adapted quickly to a comparative case design without losing the impact orientation of the project. During Measuring, AL manifests as KPI control and iterative improvement: measurement is not only about assessing final outcomes but about feeding learning back into the ongoing research process. During

Communicating, AL includes collecting feedback on how the research is received and incorporating that feedback into future dissemination activities.

4.1.5 Ethics, Responsibility, and Risk Awareness

Ethics, Responsibility, and Risk Awareness (ER) is a cross-cutting theme that runs through every phase of impact-generation, reflecting the recognition that research interventions can produce unintended, harmful, or inequitable consequences alongside their intended benefits. Workshop participants were particularly animated on this theme in the context of AI research, noting that the rapid pace of capability development can outrun institutional safeguards and that Information Systems researchers bear a professional responsibility to anticipate and mitigate harm. During Planning, ER calls for explicit ethical risk assessment: identifying who might be negatively affected by the research, what legal or regulatory constraints apply, and what safeguards will be built into the research design. A team developing a workplace monitoring system, for instance, must address questions of employee surveillance, data minimisation, and consent from the earliest design choices.

During Delivering, ER requires active monitoring for unintended negative effects and the implementation of safeguards during rollout – not merely compliance with ethics board requirements secured at the outset. During Measuring, ER surfaces in the tracking of failure indicators and the willingness to report negative findings transparently rather than suppressing them. During Communicating, ER demands honesty about limitations, risks, and boundary conditions – resisting the temptation to overstate impact claims in ways that could mislead policymakers or practitioners into over-relying on outputs that carry unacknowledged uncertainties.

4.1.6 Sustainability, Embedding, and Longevity

Sustainability, Embedding, and Longevity (SL) addresses a persistent failure mode of impact-oriented research: producing artefacts or insights that generate short-term interest but leave no lasting trace in the practices, systems, or policies they were meant to improve. Workshop participants frequently described projects whose impact dissolved once funding ended or the research team disengaged, underscoring the importance of institutionalisation as a design goal rather than an afterthought. During Planning, SL is expressed in the time horizon of the project, the identification of host organisations or champions who will sustain the artefact, and the allocation of resources for post-project maintenance. A software tool developed without a committed maintenance partner, for example, is likely to become obsolete within years of initial deployment.

During Delivering, SL manifests in training and capacity-building activities that transfer knowledge and ownership to practitioners, reducing dependency on the research team. During Measuring, SL calls for dedicated attention to institutionalisation indicators: Is the artefact being used without researcher prompting? Has it been adopted into standard operating procedures? Are the effects persisting over time? During Communicating, SL involves engaging with intermediaries – professional associations, standard-setting bodies, consultancies, or policy networks – who can carry the research contribution beyond the immediate stakeholder community and embed it in broader ecosystems of practice. Several participants noted that their most durable impacts came not from direct practitioner adoption but from research outputs that were picked up and diffused by intermediaries they had not originally targeted.

4.2 The Research Impact Checklist

The Research Impact Checklist operationalises the Research Impact Framework by organising, for each phase, relevant reflective questions according to their predominant themes. In the following, the questions related to the respective phases are presented and exemplified by cases drawn from academic practice. In this section, we introduce the Research Impact Checklist structured by Benbya et al.'s (2026) essential phases, (a) planning, (b) delivering, (c) measuring, and (d) communicating impact.

Further, we illustrate the checklist questions using recent IS publications on impact. We use the following papers for illustration purposes:

- Seidel et al. (2025) studied how Liechtenstein constructed a landmark law regulating blockchain and the token economy – the first comprehensive legal framework of its kind globally. The research drew on interviews with 20 key actors, including the country's Prime Minister, lawyers, regulators, and industry leaders. By uncovering how collective sensemaking through abstraction and elaboration drives technology regulation, the study directly informed a law passed

unanimously by Parliament in October 2019, offering a replicable blueprint for regulating emerging technologies worldwide.

- Kiselev et al. (2020) investigated four very large IT-reliant transformation projects and found out that even well managed projects failed due to poor governance. They proposed recommendations that have been adopted by the Swiss government and led to several changes, including updates to the federal project management standard, the introduction of specific steering committee support tools, a mandatory context assessment, and the establishment of independent governance quality controls.

The full Research Impact Checklist with all questions and a notes column for responses is provided in the Appendix B.

Table 4. Research Impact Checklist Questions for Planning

	#	Checklist question	Theme
☐	P1	Have I clearly identified the real-world problem, who is affected, and why it matters for society or organisations – and does this justify the research?	PR
☐	P2	To what extent is the problem socio-technical, and what role does digital technology play in it?	
☐	P3	In what application context am I studying this problem, and to what extent do I intend to contribute to solving it?	
☐	P4	Which stakeholders will benefit from or engage with my contribution, and how will their feedback shape the research design?	SE
☐	P5	What solution or artefact is needed to address the problem, and is the research focus sufficiently sharp to deliver it?	CA
☐	P6	What key prior contributions do I build on, and what design knowledge will I produce?	
☐	P7	What action possibilities will my contribution enable, and what positive effects will it achieve for users or society?	
☐	P8	How will I measure success and failure, and is my research design sufficiently aligned with real-world conditions?	AL
☐	P9	What potential constraints or risks exist, and how can they be mitigated before the project begins?	ER
☐	P10	Over what timeframe will impact be pursued, and what resources are available to assess impact beyond academia?	SL
Note: PR = Problem Relevance & Societal Value SE = Stakeholder Engagement & Co-Creation CA = Credible Actionability AL = Adaptiveness & Learning ER = Ethics & Risk Awareness SL = Sustainability & Longevity			

Using Seidel et al. (2025) as an example, the paper illustrates several of the Planning checklist questions in an exemplary way (Table 4). The paper addresses a real-world problem (P1), specifically that blockchain technology created a regulatory gap in Liechtenstein that generated legal uncertainty for businesses and inhibited economic development – a problem with direct societal relevance for the country's financial sector. The socio-technical dimension (P2) was constitutive from the outset: the research object was neither purely technological nor purely legal, but an emergent interplay of novel technology, existing financial market practices, and absent institutional frameworks. Stakeholders were mapped early and systematically (P4): the core working group deliberately united representatives from law, financial market supervision, industry, technology, and government to ensure that diverse perspectives informed the research design from the start. The intended contribution was framed in action-oriented terms from the beginning (P5, P7): the goal was not an academic report but an enacted law – an artefact that would create concrete legal certainty. Success criteria (P8) were implicitly defined by the legislative requirements: technology neutrality, innovation-friendliness, and user protection. Potential risks and tensions (P9) were actively addressed through the deliberate heterogeneity of the working group. And the time horizon (P10) was realistically set across multiple years – from the first concept paper phase in 2016 to the entry into force of the law in January 2020.

The research documented in Kiselev et al. (2020) originated from a request by the Swiss federal government to analyse large-scale project failures that had raised public concerns about the government's innovation efficiency and effectiveness (P1). In total, 14 projects were examined, all involving substantial organisational and IT-related changes (P2). To ensure that the resulting recommendations were both feasible and practically relevant, multiple public bodies were engaged in data analysis and the validation of interventions (P4, P8). While the initial phases of data collection, analysis, and intervention design had to be completed within less than six months in 2014 – driven by media pressure and requests from both chambers of the federal government – the subsequent rollout of the assessment to major government transformation initiatives, along with the refinement, extension, and integration of the proposed interventions into existing standards and practices, continued until 2018 (P5, P10).

Table 5. Research Impact Checklist Questions for Delivering

☐	D1	What is the next planned opportunity to invite feedback from practice, and who will be involved?	SE
☐	D2	How am I gathering unplanned or spontaneous feedback from external stakeholders?	
☐	D3	How has feedback from practice been incorporated into the research so far, and what changes did it trigger?	
☐	D4	What is the next tangible representation of my research progress, and is it ready to be shared with practice partners?	CA
☐	D5	How am I translating my findings into accessible, usable outputs for practitioners or policymakers?	
☐	D6	What changes in the environment have appeared, and do they require an adjustment to the research direction?	AL
☐	D7	Based on current findings, have new opportunities for impact or collaboration emerged?	
☐	D8	How is the delivery of impact being monitored and adjusted on an ongoing basis?	
☐	D9	What unintended negative effects could my contribution produce, and what safeguards are in place?	ER
☐	D10	What training, documentation, or support will be provided to enable lasting use of the research outputs?	SL
Note: SE = Stakeholder Engagement & Co-Creation CA = Credible Actionability AL = Adaptiveness & Learning ER = Ethics & Risk Awareness SL = Sustainability & Longevity			

With regard to Delivering impact (Table 5), the Seidel et al. (2025) case shows consistent and multi-layered stakeholder engagement (D1–D3). The working group operated in two circles: first a closed core of six experts that provided a protected space for collective sensemaking, and subsequently an extended circle that brought in additional legal perspectives and academic expertise. Feedback was incorporated not only through meetings but also through a formal ten-week consultation process that invited written submissions from all interested parties. The artefacts produced throughout the project – concept papers, strategy documents, presentations, and iteratively refined draft laws – functioned simultaneously as communication devices and as carriers of the evolving collective understanding (D4, D5). The Token Container Model is a particularly instructive example: it translated an abstractly legal concept into a visually accessible image that non-lawyers could understand and parliamentarians could debate. Shifts in the environment – such as the ICO wave and new application scenarios beyond cryptocurrency – were actively perceived and led to concrete adjustments in the regulatory framework (D6, D7). Unintended negative effects were systematically reflected upon through the involvement of regulatory authorities and legal scholars (D9). The handover to Parliament and the enactment of an accompanying ordinance ensured that the research outputs were translated into institutionally robust and maintainable legal instruments (D10).

One of the major challenges in impact-oriented research is to organize a collaborative process that continuously - and not only in the beginning and the end - involves stakeholders from both sides, contributes to their different aspirations and objectives, and handles resulting tensions. Similar to the idea of negotiation points described later by Winter & Hevner (2025), in the case of Kiselev et al. (2020) both the research sponsor and the responsible government agencies were constantly involved in the research design, data

collection, data analysis, intervention design (D1, D2) - as well as in the validation and evaluation process (D3, D4). The research team coached government agents so that the assessment instrument could be scaled to all ongoing large projects (D10) and conducted regular alignment meetings with the central agency tasked with providing steering committee tools (D8). Over the course of the multi-year project, however, the researchers also realized that some interventions appeared to be unwanted by stakeholders (D6, D8) so that the research focused over time on interventions that did not only prove effective but also were adopted and used.

Table 6. Research Impact Checklist Questions for Measuring

☐	M1	How is impact being triangulated across academia, business or policy, and society?	SE
☐	M2	What is the current status of evidence collection against the planned measurement items?	CA
☐	M3	What data sources and methods are being used to provide evidence for each measurement item?	
☐	M4	How is the effectiveness of the delivered contribution being evaluated, and by whom?	
☐	M5	How are KPIs being validated and standardised to ensure credibility and comparability?	
☐	M6	How are results being interpreted and reported in ways that are meaningful to different stakeholder groups?	AL
☐	M7	What actions are indicated by the current measurement results, and have they been taken?	
☐	M8	Have KPIs been reviewed and adjusted where necessary to remain appropriate to the evolving context?	ER
☐	M9	What measures indicate failure or unintended harm, and have any been triggered?	
☐	M10	How will the effects of the research be maintained, institutionalised, or embedded over time?	SL
Note: SE = Stakeholder Engagement & Co-Creation CA = Credible Actionability AL = Adaptiveness & Learning ER = Ethics & Risk Awareness SL = Sustainability & Longevity			

With regard to measuring impact (Table 6), in the Seidel et al. (2025) paper, the impact of the project was evidenced and triangulated across multiple levels (M1–M4). Academically, the outcome was documented in the form of a Management Information Systems Quarterly article, which makes an independent theoretical contribution to research on collective prospective sensemaking. At the societal and regulatory level, impact is directly measurable: the Law on Tokens and Trustworthy Technology Service Providers (TVTG) was passed unanimously by the Liechtenstein Parliament in October 2019 and entered into force on 1 January 2020 – making Liechtenstein the first country with a comprehensive legal framework for the token economy. The adoption of the law by businesses, the registration of TT service providers, and the international recognition of the law as a reference model for other jurisdictions constitute further indicators of realised impact (M5, M6). The iterative development of the draft law – with multiple text versions, annotations, and a formal consultation report – enabled continuous assessment of whether the regulatory goals were still being met (M7, M8). Potential failure indicators were addressed by incorporating critical voices from legal scholarship and industry throughout the process. The fact that the law has been discussed as a blueprint by other jurisdictions since its enactment speaks to its sustainability as a regulatory artefact (M10).

While the research reported in Kiselev et al. (2020) was commissioned, validated, and approved by the federal government, a follow-up project investigated whether its findings and designs needed to be changed for non-government organizations – which was only gradually the case (M1, M5). To the best of one of the co-author's knowledge, the amendments of the federal project management standard as well as some organizational changes in certain government agencies are still in effect today (M2-M4, M10), while other recommendations were either not adopted (mandatory trainings of steering committee members) or discontinued due to contextual changes (certain organizational roles and responsibilities).

Table 7. Research Impact Checklist Questions for Communicating

☐	C1	How am I linking my research story to current societal or organisational challenges that resonate with audiences?	PR
☐	C2	What well-known, accessible real-world examples am I using to illustrate the relevance of the research?	
☐	C3	How am I communicating my research contributions to practice audiences, and through which channels?	SE
☐	C4	What additional channels, intermediaries, or partnerships can facilitate broader dissemination?	
☐	C5	What is the next planned opportunity to communicate my research contributions to a practice or policy audience?	
☐	C6	What opportunities am I providing for audiences to give feedback and engage with the research?	
☐	C7	What story or narrative am I using to convey my findings in a way that is compelling and accessible?	CA
☐	C8	How is feedback on the impact being collected and incorporated into future research or communication activities?	AL
☐	C9	How am I packaging the research for different audiences to maximise usability and longevity of impact?	SL
☐	C10	What intermediaries can help translate and embed the research into practice, policy, or education?	
Note: PR = Problem Relevance & Societal Value SE = Stakeholder Engagement & Co-Creation CA = Credible Actionability AL = Adaptiveness & Learning SL = Sustainability & Longevity			

In the case of Seidel et al. (2025), the project's communication strategy (see the checklist questions in Table 7) was multi-dimensional from the outset, addressing academic, political, and societal audiences through distinct channels (C3–C5). Within the political process, the Prime Minister communicated the regulatory intentions publicly – for instance at the Finance Forum Liechtenstein – before the formal legislative procedure began. A press conference accompanied the launch of the consultation process, and parliamentary debates across two readings enabled broad societal discussion. The Token Container concept served as the central narrative device throughout (C7): it translated complex legal constructs into a tangible image that was accessible to policymakers and the general public alike, without sacrificing the legal precision of the statutory text. Internationally, the law was made visible in the IS community and beyond through academic publications, conference contributions, and a dedicated research article (C9, C10). Intermediaries such as the crypto associations involved in shaping the law carried the results further into their respective networks. Feedback from the consultation process fed directly into the final version of the law – demonstrating that communication in this project was not conceived as a one-way broadcast but as an active interface between research, practice, and policy (C8).

In the case of Kiselev et al. (2020), the significance of the research was clear as the triggering project failures were even discussed in national TV news so that both chambers of the parliament approved resolutions forcing the federal government to take action (C1, C2, C7). Selected aspects of the research (selection of 4 out of 14 projects, recommendations but not interventions) were academically published in the as a MISQ Executive article whose primary message is that steering committees need to pay more attention to continuously analyse the project's context and create / maintain conditions under which transformations have a chance to succeed. Full analysis results, recommendations and proposed (and validated) interventions have been published in the form of federal government guidelines for conducting large IT projects - which resulted in amendments of the federal project management standard HERMES and new tools provided for steering committees (e.g., a project initiation canvas, a guidebook) (C3). In a follow-up research project, data collection, failure analysis and intervention design have been conducted together with large private companies to investigate whether findings and interventions from a public government context need to be adapted to be applicable and useful for private organizations (which was only gradually the case) (C4, C9). Reportedly, consulting companies use the published results to conduct project assessments and co-design interventions as of today (C9, C10).

5 Implications and Conclusion

This panel report set out to document and synthesize the collective wisdom of 55 Information Systems researchers on the nature, generation, and future of research impact. Drawing on a structured World Café workshop within the ERCIS network, we have surfaced three broad conclusions.

- First, impactful Information Systems research is not accidental – it is the product of deliberate design choices made early and revisited continuously: choosing problems that matter, building trust-based stakeholder relationships, and creating artefacts that practitioners can actually use.
- Second, impact is inherently multi-dimensional and temporal. Bibliometric success and societal value are not mutually exclusive, but neither follows automatically from the other. Leading indicators – such as practitioner co-creation, prototype deployment, or policy engagement – must be cultivated actively and recognized institutionally.
- Third, the Information Systems discipline is collectively under-equipped to measure, communicate, and institutionalize its own impact. Better tools, shared vocabularies, and supportive incentive structures are needed at the field level.

The Research Impact Framework introduced in this report represents a first step toward closing this gap. By mapping six impact themes – Problem Relevance & Societal Value, Stakeholder Engagement & Co-Creation, Credible Actionability, Adaptiveness & Learning, Ethics & Risk Awareness, and Sustainability & Longevity – against the four-phase impact framework of Benbya et al. (2026), the Research Impact Framework offers researchers a structured lens for reflecting on their own practice. Its 40 guiding questions (see Appendix) span the entire research lifecycle and can be used for individual project planning, team retrospectives, doctoral training, or research group strategy sessions. Future work should empirically validate the Research Impact Framework across diverse Information Systems research contexts and explore how it can be embedded into institutional review and funding processes.

Looking ahead, the workshop participants collectively articulated a forward-looking Impact Agenda for Information Systems research centred on five priorities.

- First, the discipline should invest in systematic problem identification – developing methods to surface emerging societal challenges before they become crises and positioning Information Systems researchers as anticipatory partners for industry, government, and civil society.
- Second, Information Systems research communities – and the ERCIS network in particular – should function as transnational impact ecosystems: coordinating expertise, sharing infrastructure for stakeholder engagement, and presenting a unified voice in high-stakes policy conversations, such as the evolution of EU digital regulation.
- Third, the field needs to shorten the translation cycle from insight to usable output, drawing inspiration from rapid knowledge mobilization models that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Fourth, doctoral education and faculty development must integrate impact literacy alongside methodological training, so that the next generation of Information Systems scholars enters the field already equipped to design for relevance.
- Fifth, journals, associations, and institutions must evolve their incentive structures to reward demonstrated impact alongside academic rigor – not as competing values but as complementary expressions of what it means to do excellent Information Systems research.

The Information Systems discipline stands at a consequential juncture. Digital technologies are restructuring economies, democracies, and social relations at a pace that demands not only rigorous scholarship but engaged, responsible, and socially accountable research practice. The insights from this workshop suggest that Information Systems researchers are ready for this challenge – and that networks like ERCIS can serve as catalysts for a field-wide shift toward impact-aware Information Systems research. We invite the broader Information Systems community to build on these foundations, refine the tools introduced here, and collectively advance an agenda in which academic excellence and societal relevance reinforce each other.

Acknowledgments

The team of co-authors would like to thank the participants of the ERCIS Annual Workshop 2025 in St. Gallen Switzerland, for their valuable input.

Declaration of AI

During the preparation of this work the authors used ChatGTP, based on GPT-5.3 by OpenAI, in order to challenge and refine the clustering of the workshop participant's responses into the themes of the Research Impact Framework. The initial definition and the final decisions on the clusters were performed by the authors.

Furthermore, ChatGPT, based on GPT-5.3 by OpenAI, was partially used to streamline the different contributions of the coauthors into a coherent language.

References

- AHRC. (2010). The Arts and Humanities Research Council Annual Report and Accounts 2009-2010. Arts and Humanities Research Council.
- Benbya, H., Möhlmann, M., & Brocke, J. vom. (2026). Expanding the Scope of IS Research Impact: A Framework and Guidelines. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 27, 344–358.
- Braa, J., & Hedberg, C. (2002). The Struggle for District-Based Health Information Systems in South Africa. *The Information Society*, 18, 113–127.
- Edelman, B., Luca, M., & Svirsky, D. (2017). Racial Discrimination in the Sharing Economy: Evidence from a Field Experiment. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 9, 1–22.
- Gable, G., Sedera, D., & Chan, T. (2008). Re-conceptualizing Information System Success: The IS-Impact Measurement Model. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 9, 377–408.
- Galletta, D., Bjørn-Andersen, N., Leidner, D. E., Markus, M. L., McLean, E. R., Straub, D., & Wetherbe, J. (2019). If Practice Makes Perfect, Where do we Stand? *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 45.
- Kiselev, C., Winter, R., & Rohner, P. (2020). Project Success Requires Context-Aware Governance. *Management Information Systems Quarterly Executive*, 199–211.
- Nunamaker, J. F., Twyman, N. W., Giboney, J. S., & Briggs, R. O. (2017). Creating High-Value Real-World Impact through Systematic Programs of Research. *Management Information Systems Quarterly*, 41, 335–351.
- OECD. (2010). Development Co-operation Report 2010. OECD.
- Pan, S. L., & Pee, L. G. (2020). Usable, in-use, and useful research: A 3U framework for demonstrating practice impact. *Information Systems Journal*, 30, 403–426.
- Petter, S., Böhmman, T., Burton-Jones, A., Carter, M., Fitzgerald, B., Rosemann, M., & Soh, C. (2021). Panel: Making an Impact with Responsible Information Systems Research. In J. Valacich, A. Barua, R. Wright, A. Kankanhalli, X. Li, & S. Miranda (Eds.), *ICIS 2021 Proceedings*. Association for Information Systems.
- RCUK. (2012). Research Councils UK: impact report 2011. Department for Business, Innovation & Skills.
- REF. (2011). Decisions on assessing research impact.
- Rosemann, M., Barrett, M., Böhmman, T., Eichin, R., Legner, C., Petter, S., Rai, A., Rossi, M., & Soh, C. (2025). Cultivating Research Impact – Recommendations from IS for Business Schools and Beyond. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 57, 1520–1536.
- Seidel, S., Frick, C. J., & Brocke, J. vom. (2025). Regulating Emerging Technologies: Prospective Sensemaking Through Abstraction And Elaboration. *Management Information Systems Quarterly*, 49, 179–204.
- Whitley, E. A., & Pujadas, R. (2018). Report on a study of how consumers currently consent to share their financial data with a third party. Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).
- Winter, R., & Hevner, A. (2025). Collaborative Evolution of the IS Artefact: Negotiating Research/Practice Tensions (pp. 101–127).

Appendix A: Initial Questions and Relation to Phases

Table A. Initial Questions and Relation to Phases

<i>Planning Impact</i>	
PR	Is the real-world problem clearly articulated, experienced by identifiable actors, and socially or economically meaningful?
SE	Have relevant stakeholders been identified, prioritized, and assigned meaningful roles?
AC	What concrete action possibilities should the contribution enable in practice?
AD	How are success, failure, and adjustment criteria defined upfront?
EA	How will impact be evidenced, measured, and justified?
ER	What risks, unintended effects, or constraints are anticipated, and how will they be mitigated?
SL	Over what timeframe should impact unfold, and what resources support it beyond the project?
<i>Delivering Impact</i>	
PR	Does the contribution still address the most pressing version of the problem as contexts evolve?
SE	How are stakeholders engaged continuously, and how is feedback incorporated?
AC	How are findings translated into usable forms (artefacts, guidance, training)?
AD	How are learnings, surprises, and environmental changes detected and acted upon?
EA	How is impact delivery monitored during execution?
ER	What unintended effects might arise, and what safeguards are actively in place?
SL	What capabilities, skills, or structures are built to support continued use?
<i>Measuring Impact</i>	
PR	Do the measures capture effects that matter to practice and society—not just academia?
SE	Who validates, interprets, and owns the measurements?
AC	Do the measurements inform concrete decisions or adjustments?
AD	How are KPIs reviewed, adjusted, or abandoned if they prove unhelpful?
EA	Are data sources transparent, triangulated, and auditable?
ER	Do measurements reveal harmful effects or signal the need to stop or pivot?
SL	How is impact institutionalized, standardized, or embedded over time?
<i>Communicating Impact</i>	
PR	Is the contribution framed around real, contemporary challenges using relatable examples?
SE	How does communication invite dialogue, feedback, and co-ownership?
AC	Is the contribution packaged so others can apply, adapt, or scale it?
AD	How is feedback from communication used to refine both message and contribution?
EA	Are claims supported by credible evidence appropriate to the audience?
ER	Is impact communicated transparently, including limitations and risks?
SL	Are intermediaries and channels used to ensure long-term reach and uptake?
PR = Problem Relevance SE = Stakeholder Engagement AC = Actionability AD = Adaptiveness EA = Evidence & Accountability ER = Ethics & Responsibility SL = Sustainability	

Appendix B: Template - Research Impact Checklist

Planning				
	#	Checklist question	Remark / Notes	Theme
☐	P1	Have I clearly identified the real-world problem, who is affected, and why it matters for society or organisations – and does this justify the research?		PR
☐	P2	To what extent is the problem socio-technical, and what role does digital technology play in it?		
☐	P3	In what application context am I studying this problem, and to what extent do I intend to contribute to solving it?		
☐	P4	Which stakeholders will benefit from or engage with my contribution, and how will their feedback shape the research design?		SE
☐	P5	What solution or artefact is needed to address the problem, and is the research focus sufficiently sharp to deliver it?		CA
☐	P6	What key prior contributions do I build on, and what design knowledge will I produce?		
☐	P7	What action possibilities will my contribution enable, and what positive effects will it achieve for users or society?		
☐	P8	How will I measure success and failure, and is my research design sufficiently aligned with real-world conditions?		AL
☐	P9	What potential constraints or risks exist, and how can they be mitigated before the project begins?		ER
☐	P10	Over what timeframe will impact be pursued, and what resources are available to assess impact beyond academia?		SL

Delivering			
☐	D1	What is the next planned opportunity to invite feedback from practice, and who will be involved?	SE
☐	D2	How am I gathering unplanned or spontaneous feedback from external stakeholders?	
☐	D3	How has feedback from practice been incorporated into the research so far, and what changes did it trigger?	
☐	D4	What is the next tangible representation of my research progress, and is it ready to be shared with practice partners?	CA
☐	D5	How am I translating my findings into accessible, usable outputs for practitioners or policymakers?	
☐	D6	What changes in the environment have appeared, and do they require an adjustment to the research direction?	AL
☐	D7	Based on current findings, have new opportunities for impact or collaboration emerged?	
☐	D8	How is the delivery of impact being monitored and adjusted on an ongoing basis?	
☐	D9	What unintended negative effects could my contribution produce, and what safeguards are in place?	ER
☐	D10	What training, documentation, or support will be provided to enable lasting use of the research outputs?	SL

Measuring				
☐	M1	How is impact being triangulated across academia, business or policy, and society?		SE
☐	M2	What is the current status of evidence collection against the planned measurement items?		CA
☐	M3	What data sources and methods are being used to provide evidence for each measurement item?		
☐	M4	How is the effectiveness of the delivered contribution being evaluated, and by whom?		
☐	M5	How are KPIs being validated and standardised to ensure credibility and comparability?		
☐	M6	How are results being interpreted and reported in ways that are meaningful to different stakeholder groups?		AL
☐	M7	What actions are indicated by the current measurement results, and have they been taken?		
☐	M8	Have KPIs been reviewed and adjusted where necessary to remain appropriate to the evolving context?		ER
☐	M9	What measures indicate failure or unintended harm, and have any been triggered?		
☐	M10	How will the effects of the research be maintained, institutionalised, or embedded over time?		SL

Communicating			
☐	C1	How am I linking my research story to current societal or organisational challenges that resonate with audiences?	PR
☐	C2	What well-known, accessible real-world examples am I using to illustrate the relevance of the research?	
☐	C3	How am I communicating my research contributions to practice audiences, and through which channels?	SE
☐	C4	What additional channels, intermediaries, or partnerships can facilitate broader dissemination?	
☐	C5	What is the next planned opportunity to communicate my research contributions to a practice or policy audience?	
☐	C6	What opportunities am I providing for audiences to give feedback and engage with the research?	
☐	C7	What story or narrative am I using to convey my findings in a way that is compelling and accessible?	CA
☐	C8	How is feedback on the impact being collected and incorporated into future research or communication activities?	AL
☐	C9	How am I packaging the research for different audiences to maximise usability and longevity of impact?	SL
☐	C10	What intermediaries can help translate and embed the research into practice, policy, or education?	
Note: PR = Problem Relevance & Societal Value SE = Stakeholder Engagement & Co-Creation CA = Credible Actionability AL = Adaptiveness & Learning ER = Ethics & Risk Awareness SL = Sustainability & Longevity			

About the Authors

Jan vom Brocke is the Chair of Information Systems & Business Process Management at the University of Münster and a Director of ERCIS – The European Research Center for Information Systems. He is a Visiting Professor at the University of Liechtenstein and has been named a Fellow of the AIS, an Academic Research Fellow at MIT Center for Information Systems Research, a Fellow of the ESCP Center for Design Science in Entrepreneurship, a Schoeller Senior Fellow at Friedrich Alexander University (FAU), and a Distinguished Professor at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. He has published in top journals, among others, *Management Science*, *Management Information Systems Quarterly* (MISQ), *Information Systems Research* (ISR), *Journal of Management Information Systems* (JMIS), *Journal of Information Technology* (JIT), *Journal of the Association for Information Systems* (JAIS), *European Journal of Information System* (EJIS), *Information Systems Journal* (ISJ), *Journal of Strategic Information Systems* (JSIS), and *Communications of the ACM* (CACM).

Katrin Bergener is a faculty member in the Department of Information Systems at the University of Münster, where her research focuses on creativity management, innovation, group support, and virtual group processes. She holds a doctorate from the University of Münster and has studied both information systems and linguistics, including an exchange year at the University of Auckland. Since 2024 she has been the Managing Director of the European Research Center for Information Systems (ERCIS), and she has held various academic leadership roles at the University of Münster, including coordinator of the University of Münster Centre for Europe. Katrin Bergener has contributed extensively to information systems research and teaching, supervising theses and publishing work on digital innovation and collaborative processes.

Armin Stein is a faculty member in the Department of Information Systems at the University of Münster, where he focuses his research on Business Process Management, Gaming Communities, and Information Systems Education. He is also interested in Diversity in the Information Systems research field. He earned his doctorate at the Münster School of Business and Economics in 2010. Since then, Armin has served as Managing Director of the European Research Center for Information Systems (ERCIS), and he also holds lectureships at the German-Vietnamese University and the University of Liechtenstein. Beyond teaching and administration, Armin contributes to the academic community through roles in major conferences and editorial activities.

Sandro Franzoi is an Assistant Professor and research group lead at the Chair of Information Systems and Business Process Management at the University of Münster. He obtained his PhD in Information Systems at the University of Liechtenstein. His research sits at the intersection of information systems, process science, and organization science, exploring process complexity and the associated dynamics of business processes and organizational routines. To study these phenomena, he combines computational methods such as process mining with qualitative inquiry to better understand how and why processes change over time. Through such computational research designs, he leverages digital trace data to investigate how technologies such as AI and process mining shape organizational work and how these insights can be used to theorize socio-technical phenomena more broadly.

Jörg Becker is Professor of Information Systems and Information Management at the University of Münster and a leading scholar in process management, information modelling, enterprise systems, e-government, and digital transformation. He is academic co-director of the European Research Center for Information Systems (ERCIS), Fellow of the Society for Computer Sciences (GI), member of the North-Rhine Westphalian Academy of Sciences, and Member of the Platform "Digital Administration and Public IT" of the national German Digital Summit. His publication record includes work in journal outlets such as *Management Information Systems Quarterly*, *Business Process Management Journal*, *Information Systems and e-Business Management*, *Business & Information Systems Engineering*, *Electronic Markets*, and *Government Information Quarterly*.

Thomas Grisold is Full Professor of Information Systems and Applied AI at WU Vienna University of Economics and Business. His research examines the organizational and societal implications of artificial intelligence, digital technologies, and process innovation, with a particular focus on human-AI interaction, business process management, and digital trace data. His work has appeared in leading journals including *Management Information Systems Quarterly* and on *Harvard Business Review*. Prior to joining WU Vienna, he held academic positions at the University of St. Gallen and the University of Liechtenstein. He has been a visiting researcher at the University of Notre Dame, Queensland University of Technology, Weizenbaum Institute and Lancaster University.

Andreas Hein is an Assistant Professor of IT Management (tenure track) affiliated with the Institute of Information Systems and Digital Business in the School of Management of the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland. Before that, he held a position as a postdoctoral researcher at the School for Computation, Information and Technology of the Technical University of Munich, Germany, where he also received his PhD. In addition, Andreas has three years of experience as a Senior Strategy Consultant at IBM. His work has appeared in *Management Information Systems Quarterly*, the *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, the *Information Systems Journal*, the *Journal of Information Technology*, and the *European Journal of Information Systems*, as well as refereed conference proceedings such as the International and the European Conference on Information Systems. Andreas focuses his research on IT management at the organizational level, on digital platform ecosystems, and on IT architecture.

Dariusz Król is a Professor at Wrocław University of Science and Technology, where he serves as the Vice-Dean for General Affairs in the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology and leads the Knowledge Engineering Group. He has previously held positions as a Marie Curie Senior Research Fellow and a DAAD Research Fellow. His research and teaching focus on knowledge engineering applications, data quality, and artificial intelligence technologies for adaptive and sustainable manufacturing systems. Dariusz has published over 160 peer-reviewed papers, co-authored three books, and co-edited four others. In addition to his academic work, he has extensive industry experience, having served as CEO and Head of R&D. His significant contributions to the field have been recognized by organizations such as IBM, the European Commission, the Polish National Center for Science, the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and DAAD. Furthermore, he has been elected to the Polish Accreditation Committee in recognition of his professional standing.

Isabel Ramos is Associate Professor with Habilitation in Information Systems at the Department of Information Systems, School of Engineering, University of Minho. Her leadership roles include Director of the Department of Information Systems, Director of the Doctoral Programme in Information Technologies and Systems, and Erasmus+ academic coordinator. Internationally, she serves on the Steering Board of the European Research Center for Information Systems (ERCIS) and co-leads its Competence Center on Digital Transformation of SMEs. She was Vice-President for Member Services and Chapters of the Association for Information Systems and President of the Portuguese Chapter of the Association for Information Systems. She has been President of APSI and Conference Co-Chair of ICIS 2026. Her distinctions include the IIAKM Lifetime Academic Achievement Award, IFIP Outstanding Service Award, IFIP Silver Core Award, and several best-paper recognitions.

Michael Rosemann is the Director of the Centre for Future Enterprise and a Professor of Information Systems at Queensland University of Technology (QUT). His areas of research are business process management and innovation systems. His papers have been published in journals such as *Management Information Systems Quarterly*, *European Journal of Information Systems*, the *Journal of the AIS* and the *Journal for Strategic Information Systems*. His research has been funded by organizations such as Accenture, Cisco, PwC, SAP, Rio Tinto and Woolworths and he established four industry funded Chairs at QUT. As the Vice President Strategic Partnerships of the AIS, he chairs the annual AIS Impact Award Committee and the AIS Industry Advisory Board. In previous roles, he has been Head of QUT's Information Systems School (2012-16) and QUT's Director of Corporate Engagement (2018-19). He is also the Honorary Consul for Germany in Southern Queensland.

Minseok Song is a professor in the Department of Industrial and Management Engineering at POSTECH (Pohang University of Science and Technology), Republic of Korea. His research focuses on process mining, industrial artificial intelligence, business process management, and data-driven decision making. He has published research in leading journals and conferences in the fields of information systems, operations management, and industrial engineering. His recent work explores integrating process mining and generative AI to enable organizational intelligence and digital transformation. He actively collaborates with industry and public organizations on AI-enabled process innovation and analytics projects.

Robert Winter is professor emeritus at University of St. Gallen (HSG), Institute of Information Systems and Digital Business. Having been founding director of HSG's Executive MBA program in Business Engineering, vice editor-in-chief of the *Business & Information Systems Engineering* journal and senior editor of the *European Journal of Information Systems*, he currently serves on the editorial board of *Management Information Systems Quarterly Executive*. His research interests include design science research methodology and all aspects of enterprise-level IS research, such as enterprise architecture management, design and governance of digital platforms, corporate data management, and design and governance of enterprise transformation. His research has been published in many top-tier IS journals such as

Management Information Systems Quarterly, *Journal of the Association of Information Systems* and *Journal of Information Technology*. Being a co-author of the Echeloned Design Science Research approach, his latest book covers Designing the Information Systems Artefact.

Copyright © 2026 by the Association for Information Systems. Permission to make digital or hard copies of all or part of this work for personal or classroom use is granted without fee provided that copies are not made or distributed for profit or commercial advantage and that copies bear this notice and full citation on the first page. Copyright for components of this work owned by others than the Association for Information Systems must be honored. Abstracting with credit is permitted. To copy otherwise, to republish, to post on servers, or to redistribute to lists requires prior specific permission and/or fee. Request permission to publish from: AIS Administrative Office, P.O. Box 2712 Atlanta, GA, 30301-2712 Attn: Reprints or via e-mail from publications@aisnet.org.