

The logo features the word "HubIT" in white, bold, sans-serif font on a dark blue rectangular background. Surrounding the rectangle are several colorful geometric shapes: a cyan square at the top left, an orange trapezoid at the top right, a red triangle on the left, and a magenta shape on the right.

# HubIT

**TECHNOLOGY WITH  
AND FOR SOCIETY**



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# Assessing the Impact of SSH–RRI approach on ICT Research & Innovation: The HubIT project

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# The concept of Responsible Research and Innovation

"Responsible Research and Innovation is a transparent, interactive process by which societal actors and innovators become mutually responsive to each other with a view to the (ethical) acceptability, sustainability and societal desirability of the innovation process and its marketable products," (Von Schomberg, 2013, p.19).

# RRI Dimensions

- Public engagement,
- Gender equality,
- Science education,
- Open access,
- Ethics,
- Governance

and two additional dimensions:

- Sustainability
- Social justice

# Background

- . The European Commission adopted the SSH-RRI approach and defined it as the "continuous engagement of societal actors during the whole research and innovation process."



- . Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) in the process of ICT R&I calls for a mutual dialog between SSH researchers and ICT researchers and developers.

# The HubIT Project

Aims to establish a HUB for boosting interaction between ICT developers, SSH researchers and other stakeholders to activate a constructive interaction that will lead to a responsible approach in ICT R&I (RRI approach)

# HubIT in a nutshell



- **Speed-dating** events, national **workshops**, international thematic workshops, **networking** events, international policy workshops, etc.
- Facilitate **practical collaborations** and **experimental activities**: through European inclusive hackathons, a European Common Ground Camp and European Interactive ICT labs.
- Establish evidence base for R&I policies measured by **key success indicators**: through key performance indicators and **policy recommendations**.
- Project online platform
- Propose a **European Framework Model** for responsible ICT innovation



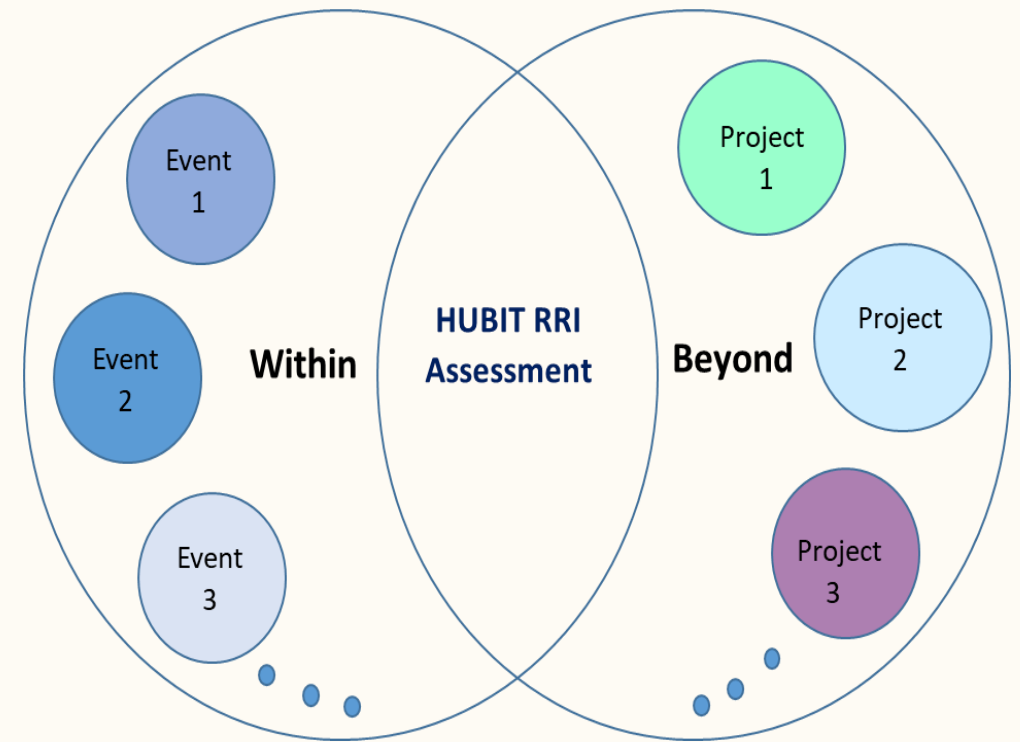
# SSH-RRI Approach of Assessment

Two main methodologies:

- Social Impact Assessment (SIA) methodology : defined as "the process of identifying the future consequences of current or proposed actions, which are related to individuals, organizations and social macro-systems" (Becker, 2001 p. 312).
- Qualitative evaluation methodology that focused on the narratives that accompany RRI activities and especially those related to SSH-ICT interactions

# The Assessment Process

- **On the ground** – within events and other activities implemented as part of the HubIT project
- **Other projects beyond HubIT** - Selected H2020 projects
- **Project as a whole** - HubIT project in its entirety



# Evaluation Tools and measures

- . Questionnaires
- . Event feedback
- . Ethnographic observation
- . Interviews



Qualitative

Quantitative

# The RRI assessment activities - Pilot

- ✓ National workshop - in Slovakia in May 2018
- ✓ Triple events (Annual Conference, Workshop for social scientists and Speed-dating) in Tartu in September 2018.

## The aims:

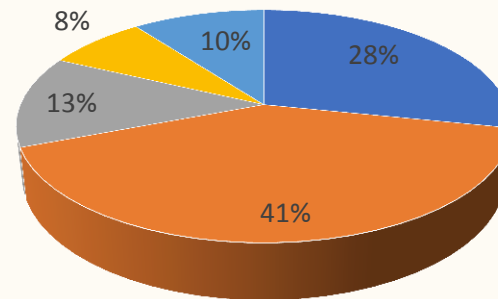
- ✓ Raise awareness and understanding of the role of the SSH-RRI approach
- ✓ To boost collaboration between SSH and ICT research communities

# The RRI assessment questions:

1. To what extent the event succeeded in **targeting members of ICT and SSH communities**? (composition of participants)
2. To what extent the event contributed to **mutual understanding of both communities** in the benefits of bridging between them? (future collaboration)
3. To what extent the event contributed to **identifying societal problems that stem from ICT** development?
4. To what extent the event contributed to **acceptance of RRI approach** along its six dimensions? (awareness on RRI)

# First results (Slovakia, Estonia)

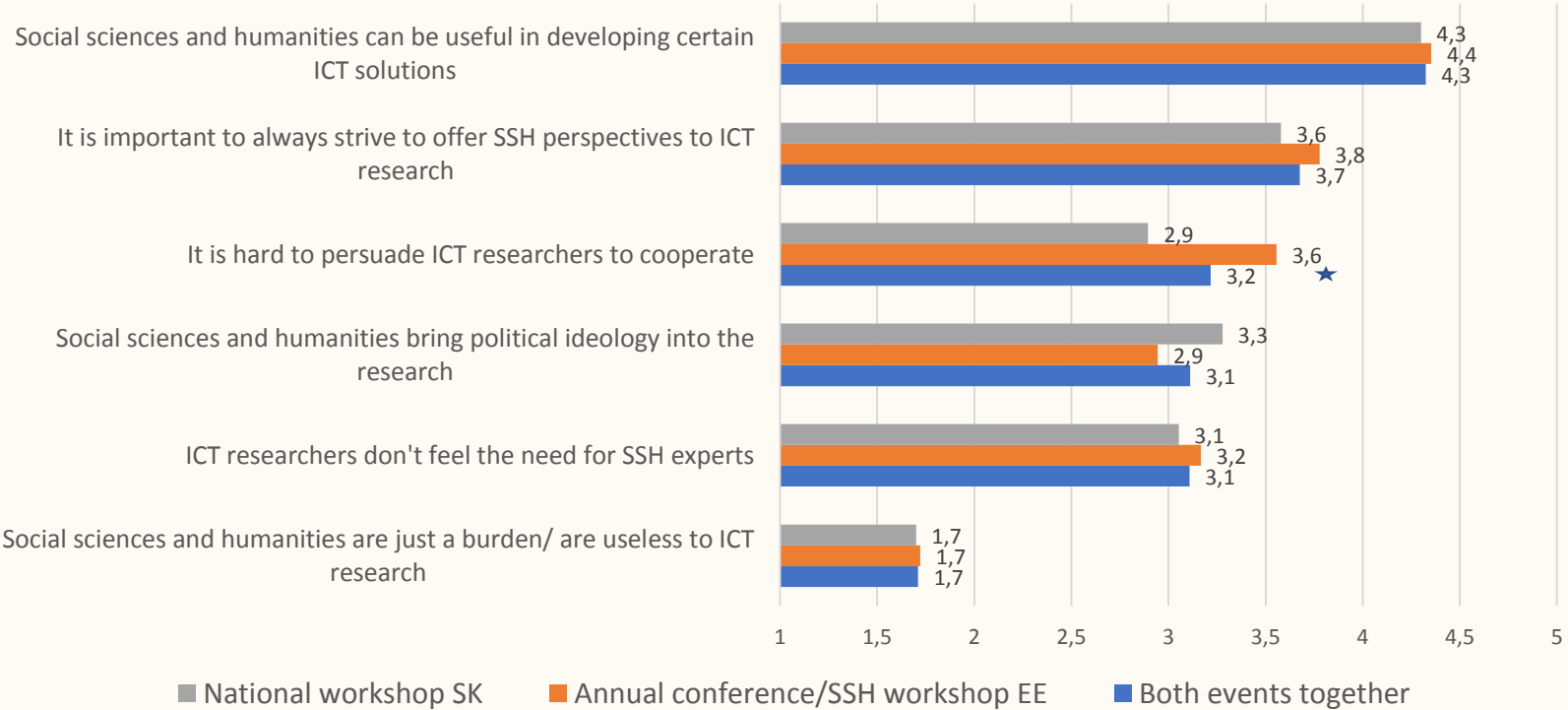
Distribution of participants of assessed events by discipline  
N=39 (Slovakia – 20; Tartu – 19)



- Information and communications technology
- Social sciences
- Humanities
- Public administration / decision making
- Other

# The benefit of bridging between the two communities in support of RRI approach in ICT development

Figure 2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements regarding the interaction between SSH and ICT communities in support of RRI?



★ Significant p<0.021



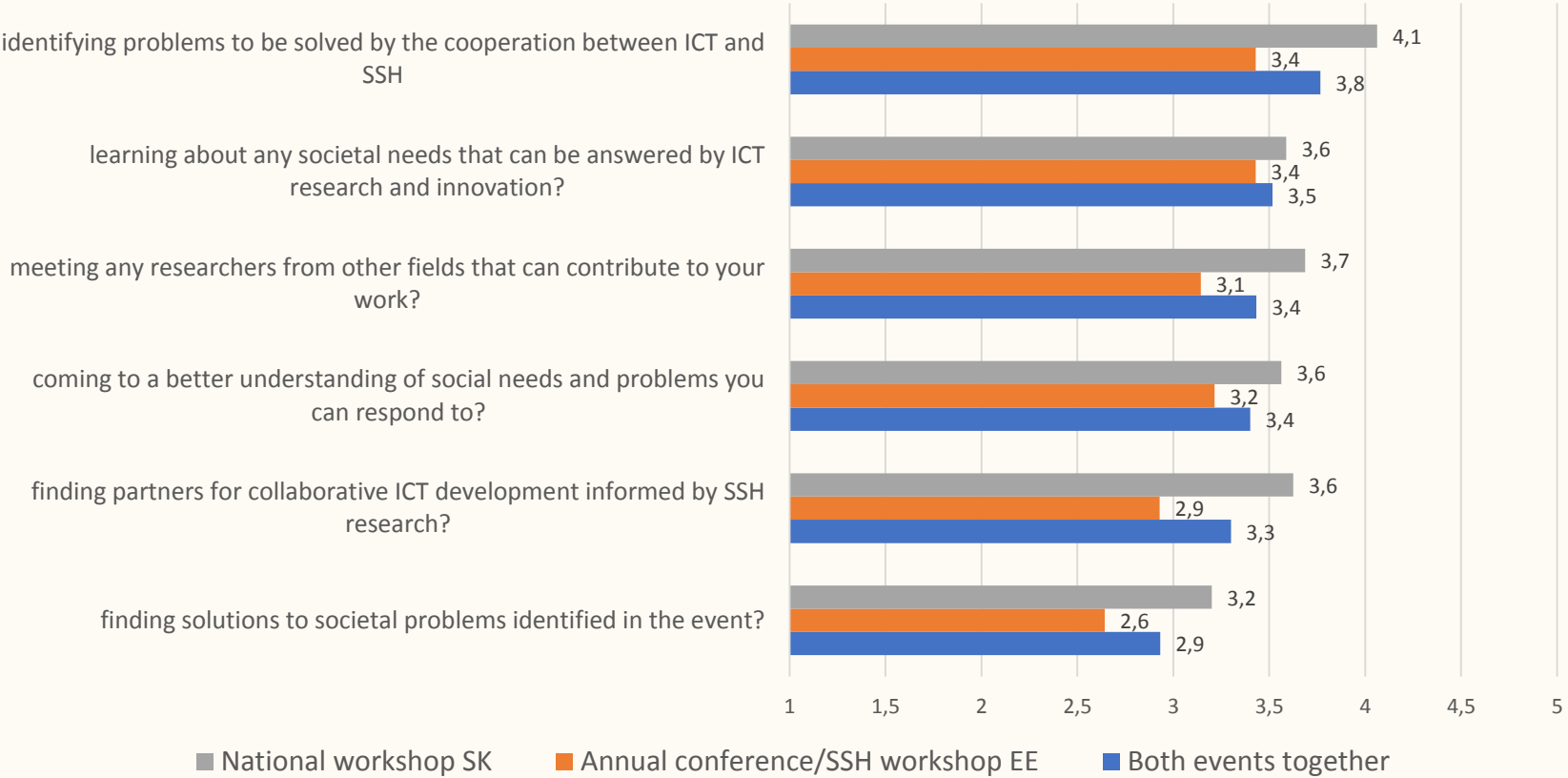
## Perceived options and willingness for ICT –SSH collaboration

- . Most of the participants in the two events (80% = SSH and 83% = ICT) foresee future engagement in cooperation with people from the other fields (ICT or SSH)
- . Most of them (77%) found the workshop event to be very useful ( $M=4.03$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ) and foresee engagement with ICT researcher



# Awareness to the contribution of SSH involvement in ICT development to the identification of societal problems

Figure 3. To what extent did participating in the event(s) help you in...



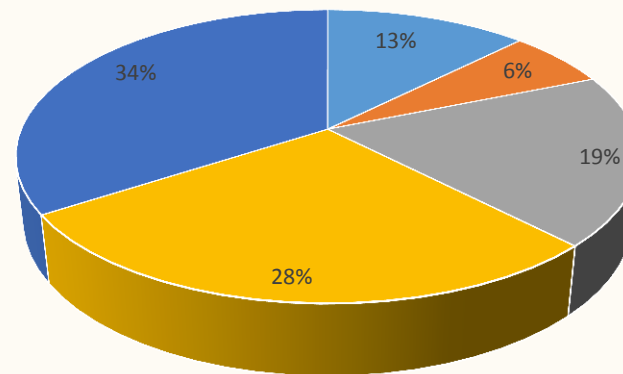
No significant were found



# Understanding and accepting the concept of RRI

- 62% of the respondents (N=32) indicated that following the event they improved their understanding of the RRI approach at high to very high level.

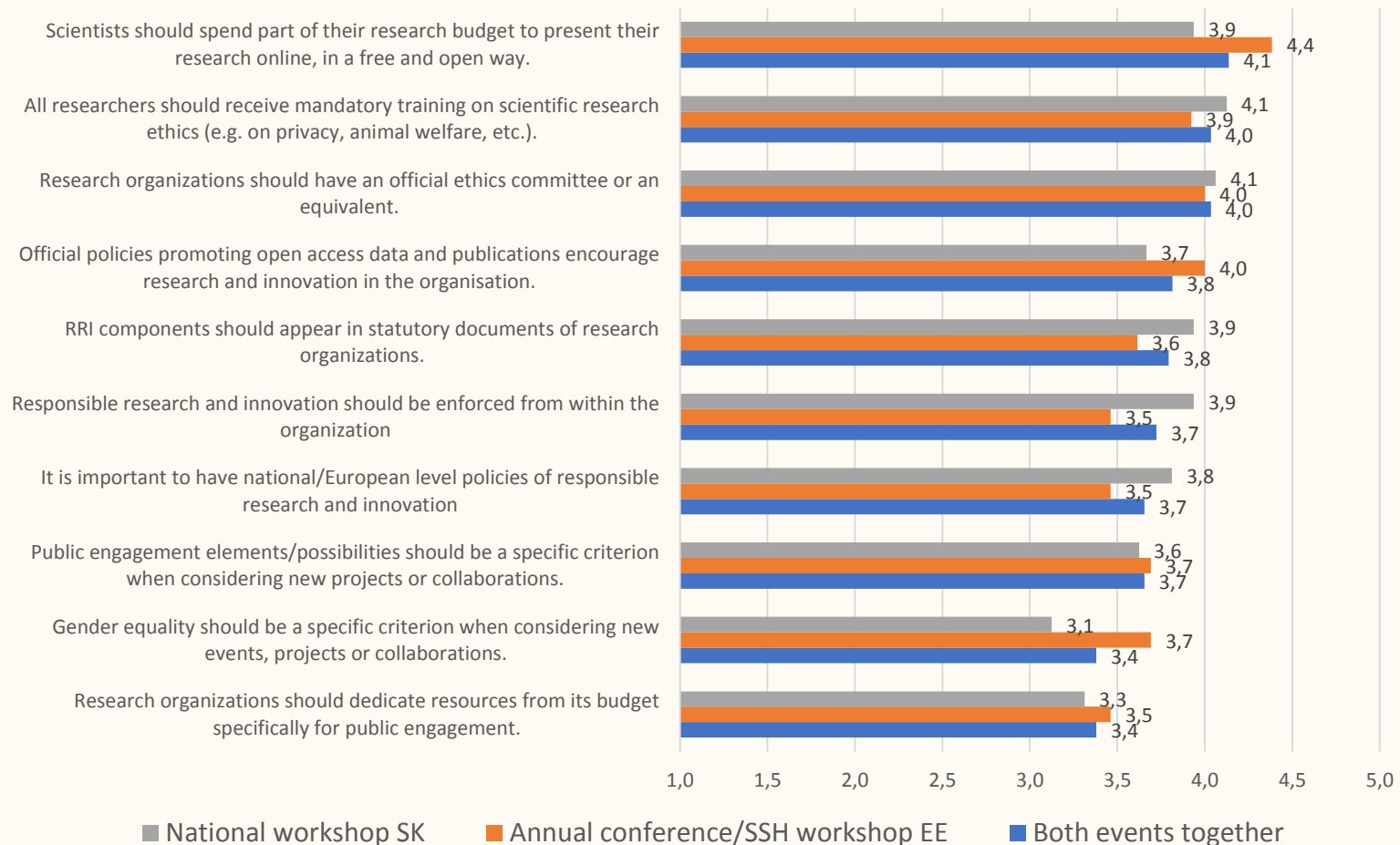
Understanding better the concept of RRI



■ Very low ■ Low ■ Medium ■ High ■ Very high

# Attitudes towards the various dimensions of RRI

Figure 4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding RRI dimensions?



**Open Access & Ethics**

No significant differences were found

## Quantification of “responsibility” and the tick-boxing logic

- . ...*“I feel that RRI is a fancy term that European Commission has come up with that is more often than not used as an empty signifier (i.e. it is just put into documents without following the principle)”*
- . Participants resistance to quantifiable key performance indicators (Rome meeting)
- . Fear that RRI is just something that needs to be “checked”, but not followed in spirit
- . Is social desirability bias inherent to our own RRI assessment surveys?
- . More emphasis on open questions and observation.

# SSH bring ideology and politics into science

- . *“I became aware that PC [political correctness culture] would creep into ICT research”*
- . *“I am aware of the EC research ideology...”*
- . Ideologization of the term – for some time RRI has been considered technocratically (outside of any political discussion), but reality is different.
- . While RRI *ideally* shouldn't be seen as a right/left issue, but as an objective need to consider societal needs in formulating and implementing research ideas, we might be faced with a reality of it being framed as a *“power discourse”*.

# Gender equality

- *“ICT representatives were mainly men while the SSH area was represented mainly by women. This provides the feeling that SSH is something that women fight for. For instance, in the conference panel men (ICT) formulated their messages softer, while the woman speaker (SSH) was more a “right-fighter”*
- More women in organizing roles and more women as active event participants, but male speakers.
- Gender equality – loaded dimension

# Threats vs. opportunities

- . *“ICT representatives talked rarely to the SSH people (experience based on one table)...ICT people seemed to be more involved (engaged) in the threats discussion, while SSH more in the opportunities.”*
- . Reality can be the opposite of the stereotype/assumption (the stereotypes at the very core of our project – “Responsible SSH needs to mitigate the irresponsibility of ICT”)

# Conclusions based on narratives

- . Two main associations with RRI – societal good & inclusion
- . RRI – not seen as a neutral concept; “discourse of dominance” by SSH over other disciplines.
- . Takeaway: RRI shouldn't be seen as a resource monopolized by SSH. Conversely, SSH can offer added value to ICT beyond issues of ethics and responsibility.
- . RRI – space for reflection and multiplicity of perspectives. Responsibility shouldn't be forced -> can lead to a) alienation and b) quantification of RRI and tick-boxing logic
- . Forced responsibility IS NOT responsibility



# General Conclusions

- . The events were successful in terms of raising understanding and awareness of the SSH-RRI approach
- . The participants expressed their interest to collaborate with researchers from other fields
- . Several initiations for future collaboration between SSH and ICT people were created.

# First insight regarding the assessment process

Even in these relatively early stages of the HubIT project some specific characteristics of the HubIT assessment activities emerged

- . The assessment activities were found to be deeply embedded in the project.
- . The assessment activities evolve in accordance with the progress of the project. This allows for continuous adjustment of the project activities.
- . In the course of the evaluation activities a community around the evaluation activities was created, actively engaging partners and stakeholders from different fields in the process of assessment.
- . The importance of qualitative data was recognized. Quantitative approach in itself is in line with the gist of RRI

# Thank you!



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