

**Responsible Research Evaluation Forum***Using the SCOPE Framework to Evaluate Responsibly***Project Justification:**

Research impact evaluation has become a staple service in the portfolio of US university libraries. A major challenge librarians face in this arena is the overuse, by third parties, of a small number of publication-based citation metrics or research income-based measures. These poor evaluation mechanisms are naturally absorbed and reused by institutions. However, these mechanisms can have a negative effect on the research ecosystem, particularly on the types of research, researchers and behaviors, rewarded and embedded, including promotion and tenure. Narrow criteria and indicators of research quality or impact distort incentives, create unsustainable pressures on researchers, and exacerbate problems with research integrity and reproducibility ([Aubert-Bonn & Pinxten, 2021](#)). In addition, it reduces the diversity of research missions and purposes. Librarians are therefore faced with the need to push back on unhelpful indicators, and highlight more reliable methods of evaluating individual researchers, research groups, research outputs and outcomes, and institutions. This forum proposal requests the sum of \$149,535 to plan and deliver a two-day, in-person forum to build a community of practice of impact librarians, researchers, bibliometricians, and research managers. The goal of the forum is to learn about the [SCOPE framework](#) for responsible research evaluation—a five-stage process that encourages value-led evaluations that are context-specific, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative options, and ensures reduced bias and greater equity in the research evaluation process—and workshop this framework using relative US-based concepts. The forum will be a mix of training sessions and breakout sessions facilitated by experts who developed and are actively using the framework. At the close of the forum, communities of practice will be established to share information, participate in mutual learning supported by participants to continue to strengthen best practice to evolve assessment criteria, tools, and processes based on learning from own evaluations and those of others. The aim of SCOPE is to encourage librarians and other practitioners to engage with best practices to provide responsible research evaluation services to their organizations ([Himanen & Gadd, 2019](#)). As such, this forum proposal **aligns with the National Leadership Grants for Libraries Program’s Goals 1 and 5**. To build capacity (Goal 1), this proposal will provide librarians with professional development, training, and skill-building related to the evolving field of responsible research evaluation. To strengthen the ability of libraries to work collaboratively for the benefit of the communities they serve (Goal 5) this forum will convene librarians and research managers to collectively explore how they may deploy SCOPE both individually and across the sector to deliver informed and responsible research evaluations and to continue this work beyond the event through the establishment of communities of practice.

In response to current evaluation processes and issues, the global community has developed a series of manifestos and principles governing a more responsible approach to researcher evaluation ([DORA](#)), to the use of metrics in general ([The Metric Tide](#)) and to the use of bibliometrics ([Leiden Manifesto](#)) in particular. The European University Association, Science Europe, and the European Commission have recently published an [Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment](#) that sets a shared direction for changes in assessment practices, and some institutions have adopted a responsible metrics policy based on such principles. However, when it comes to applying those principles to the design of alternative research evaluation mechanisms, institutions often struggle due to lack of expertise and external pressures. As a group of practicing research managers, librarians, and administrators, the International Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS) Research Evaluation Group (REG) has brought together representatives from a range of global member societies to work towards fairer and more meaningful research evaluation. To address the issue of designing more responsible principle-led evaluations, the INORMS REG has developed [SCOPE](#). Despite its relative newness, in a recent international survey, 10% of participants said that they were using SCOPE to inform their institutional approach to responsible research evaluation. The framework has been used by publishers, national funding bodies, and institutions to design better evaluation approaches. The INORMS REG, which seeks funding to share and build upon this work with a diverse group of practitioners ([SCOPE](#)), shares the belief that Librarians are “[in a] uniquely valuable position to help scholars understand the strengths and limitations of the underlying bibliographic data used in analysis, as well as which methods are appropriate” ([Namachivivaya, 2022](#)). It is the value proposition it provides to libraries that makes this work necessary ([Bryant, 2022](#)). This project will be led by Dr. Baron Wolf from the U. of Kentucky (UK). Dr. Wolf serves on the INORMS REG group and in his role as Asst. VP for Research and Director of Research Analytics at UK he has deployed SCOPE techniques and has used the framework with the University of Glasgow. This project will include partners from a variety of institutions including Dr. Elizabeth Gadd, Chair of the

INORMS REG, who also serves as Research Policy Manager at Loughborough University, United Kingdom; Rachel Miles, Research Impact Librarian from Virginia Tech University Libraries; and Laura Himanen, Research Specialist from Tampere University Finland (REG member). In addition, the research plans to collaborate with Dr. Rebecca Bryant, Senior Program Officer at [OCLC Research](#) and complement the related partnership work and community of practice building OCLC Research is currently doing with the [OCLC Research Library Partnership](#) network.

**Project Work Plan:** This project will develop a two-day, in-person forum that convenes librarians, researchers, and research managers to explore the framework and best practices related to responsible research evaluation, use of bibliometrics, and impact of research evaluation and rankings. Sessions will be delivered by REG members who have used the framework and prominent national/international speakers who practice research evaluation, impact assessment, and use of bibliometrics in assessment. The forum will be followed by four virtual sessions for participants to share how they are using the framework at their institutions. The project will begin with planning efforts among REG members and partners to develop the program theme, curriculum, and forum logistics. Project funds will support effort for two US-based personnel and three international experts (travel), delivery of the forum (meeting venue expenses), participant travel scholarships, and participant stipends to help build a US-based community of practice to sustain these efforts. Participants not applying for travel scholarships will be responsible for all travel expenses. The total budget for this proposal is \$149,535 and will support the project team and 100 participants (personnel \$22,007; travel \$13,000; conference expenses \$30,500; speaker honorariums/expenses \$21,000; participant travel scholarships \$20,000; participant support for community of practice \$7,500; indirect costs \$30,964). Effort will be made to align this forum with other relative meetings such as the American Library Association annual meeting and the American College & University Libraries conference to ensure participants have the financial resources to be involved.

**Project Diversity Plan:** At the heart of evaluating research responsibly, specifically using the SCOPE framework, is understanding the diverse scientific fields and entities under evaluation. The REG is an internationally diverse group of practitioners, with equal gender representation and diverse fields of expertise. The group's key aim is to protect diversity in scholarship by recognizing and rewarding those 'things that matter' in research, rather than dimensions such as publications and rankings which inherently benefit non-diverse groups ([Gadd, 2020](#)). *Evaluate with the evaluated* is one of SCOPE's key principles and thus SCOPE is an inclusive framework for responsible research evaluation. The fundamental goal is to include diverse perspectives in the evaluation process—in terms of research discipline, gender, race/ethnicity, tenure status, and career progression. The evaluation framework is focused on bottom-up discussions and not top-down assessments. It focuses on asking the practitioners questions like *what is the best way to move forward with an evaluation in your discipline?* A diverse mix of disciplines, methods, and backgrounds is needed to ensure responsible evaluation that does not discriminate against those being evaluated. The SCOPE framework focuses on respecting the diversity of science and ensuring individuals involved in planning and research assessment/evaluations are aware of the diversity and have diverse backgrounds to be able to consider both unintended consequences as well as discriminatory effects. This forum proposal will bring together practitioners from across the United States to deploy the SCOPE framework, present workshop-relevant topics for responsible research evaluation, discuss the use of bibliometrics, and develop case studies specific to the US context. Particular attention will be paid to ensure that smaller institutions, and specifically minority-serving institutions, are provided support to participate in the forum.

**Project Results:** The outcome of this forum will be the establishment of a cohort of US Library-based research evaluators equipped with a practical means by which to design and implement responsible research evaluations at their institutions. This cohort, in turn, will have a positive impact on institutional decision-making and autonomy, researcher well-being, and research culture, ensuring that the right things are rewarded and incentivized and a diversity of perspectives is included in all research assessments. Approximately three months after the forum, participants will be invited to four virtual sessions throughout the year to provide updates and case studies on their responsible evaluation practices using SCOPE at their home institutions. In addition, stipends will be available for several participants to form regional communities that will work to develop case studies and publish their findings. This cohort of Librarians will be expected to form a community of practice for the sharing of best practices in research evaluation and cascading SCOPE training to others, seeding a responsible research evaluation culture more broadly in the United States and beyond. This work will be accomplished through our established partnerships between INORMS REG, OCLC, and others.