

Concordats and Agreement Review

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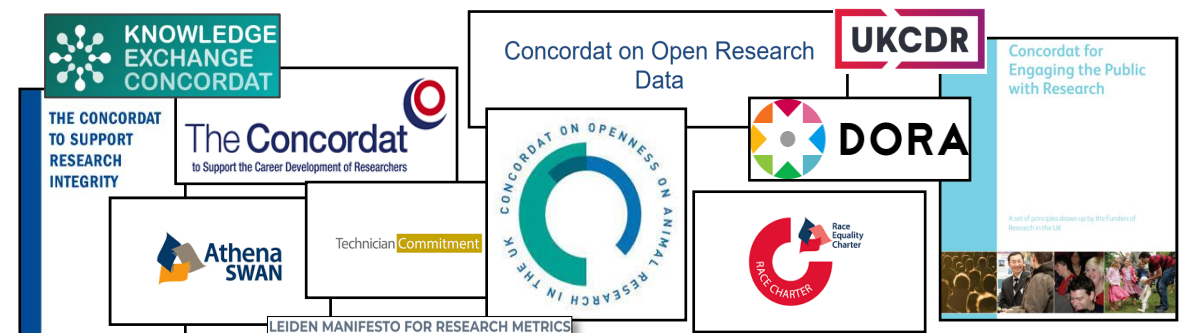
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10 November 2022

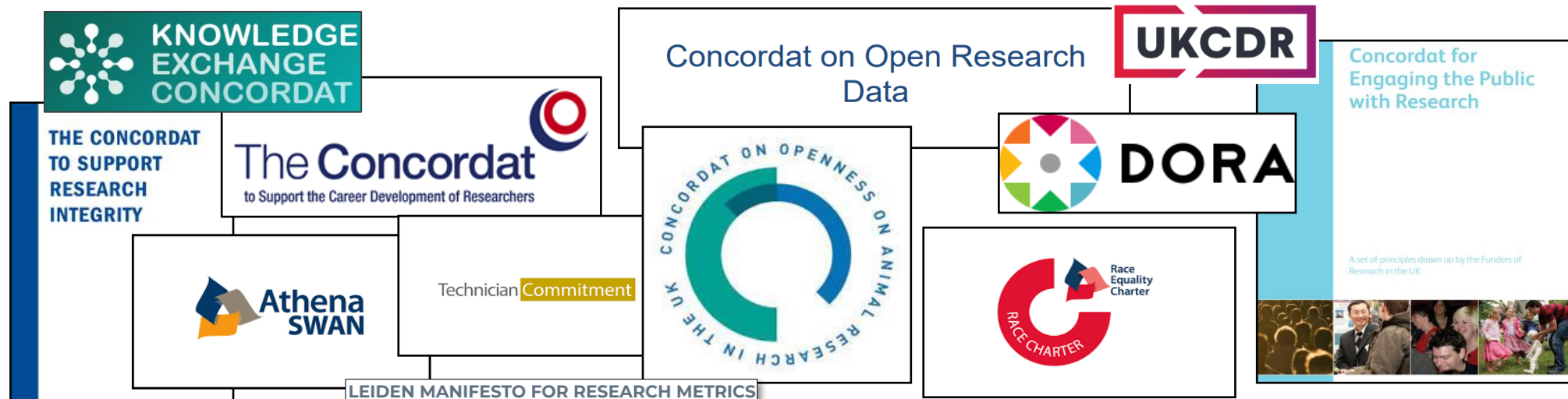


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Background

There is momentum behind a range of important initiatives to improve the culture and environment in which UK research takes place. These initiatives have grown organically, in response to challenges and opportunities, and cover a range of issues to support researchers and their activities.



Concordats engaged in the project

Starting rationale

These initiatives have diverse approaches to engagement and oversight, different levels of maturity, varying scope/focus, and inconsistent monitoring of take-up, impact, or administrative requirements.

- There was also no assessment of their collective effect on the research cultures and environments in the UK, nor of any gaps in their remit.

- This was an opportunity to gather insights on the effects of these initiatives and how they interact.

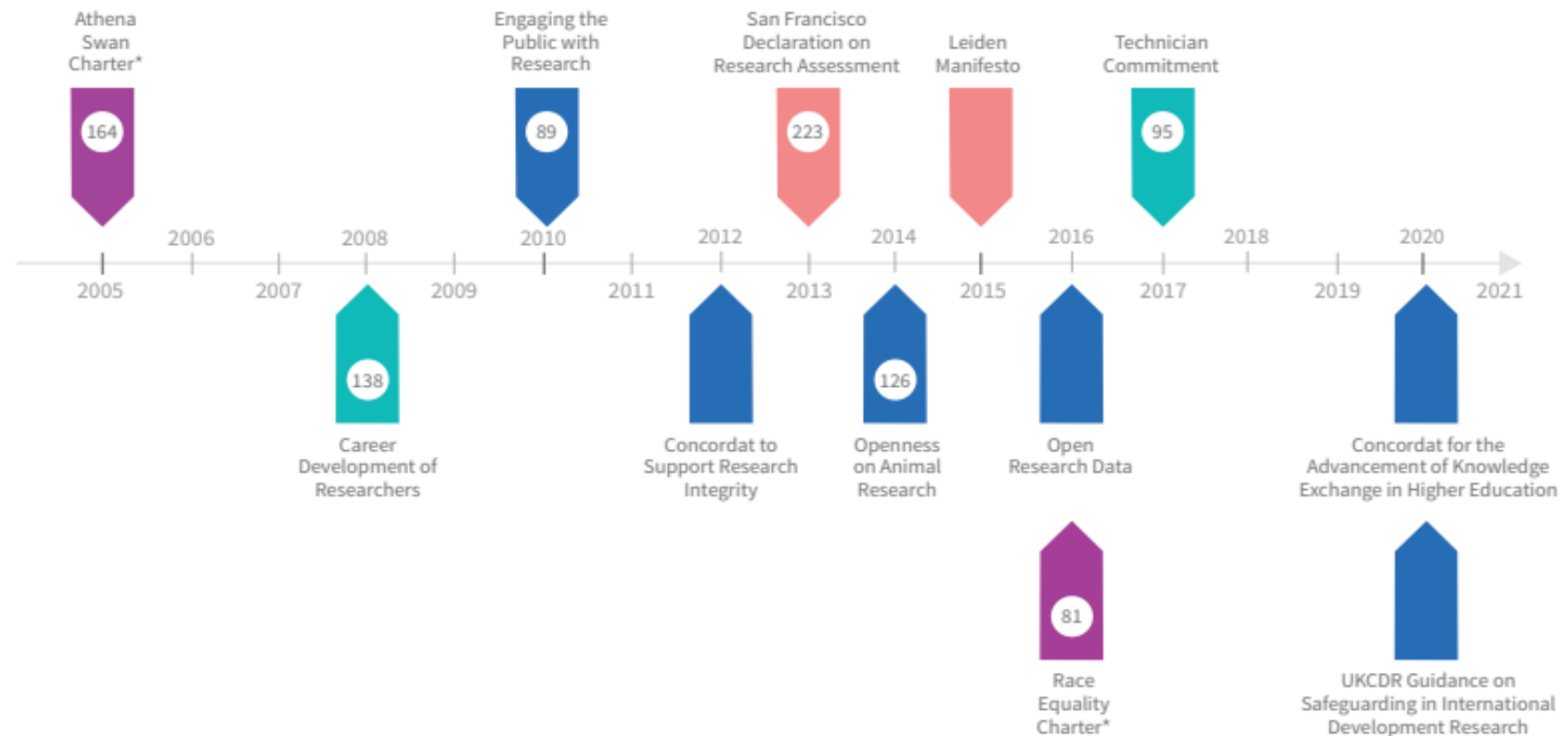
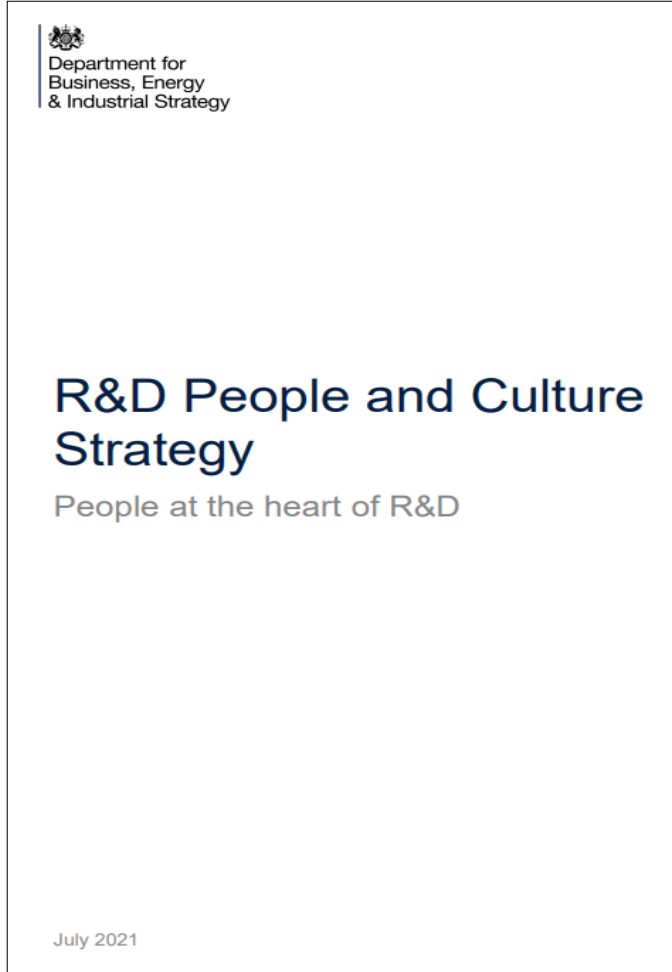


Image: Concordat and Agreement Review Figure 3: Timeline Source: Phase 1 report

Wider alignments



Commissioning partners



Method and ambition of the CAR Phase 1

Aim

Phase 1 was an opportunity to gain insights on the effects of these initiatives and how they interact.

Approach

The study was not designed to measure the impact of specific initiatives, it was to look at the overall impact these initiatives have had in shaping research cultures and environments across the UK.

Consultants

Basis Social, a research and insight consultancy were commissioned to undertake the Phase 1 work.

Method and ambition of the CAR Phase 1 continued

Timeline

The fieldwork for Phase 1 took place between July to September 2021

Engagements

- External Challenge group
- Senior leaders from UUK, Wellcome and UKRI
- UKRI Internal Group
- Initiative Owners
- Independent Review of Bureaucracy team

Final Report

The report published in March 2022 provides the first ever snapshot of this *initiative landscape and the insights outlined are part of larger conversations.

The report purposely does not draw conclusions or recommendations.

*as at Summer 2021

CAR Phase 1 insights

- 1. It's a complex landscape with limited homogeneous experience of both the concordats and agreements across institution types or roles. This means different institutions and people experience the concordats in different ways.**
2. It's difficult to evidence the direct impact of the initiatives on research culture as they have been embedded into organisations' strategies and processes. Because of the diversity within the initiatives and how they were implemented, pinpointing their direct impact on research culture is difficult.
3. The report explicitly acknowledges that the initiatives do have an impact and role to play. For example, facilitating discussion on sensitive subjects and engaging senior leaders.
- 4. The impact of the initiatives comes as much from how organisations put them into effect as it does the initiative requirements themselves. The organic development of the initiatives as a collective is matched with equally organic implementation across organisations.**
5. No obvious overlap between aims was found, but collectively they can create administrative burden. Tracking both initiative and institutional progress for each initiative can also be administratively challenging.
- 6. There's a clear call from both initiative owners and implementers to explore potential alignments to help reduce burden and coordinate reporting.**

Concordats and Agreements Review – Phase 2



CAR Phase 2 - background

Phase 2 brings together the initiative owners and the research and innovation community to look for potential future alignments to increase influence, capacity, and efficiency across the landscape.

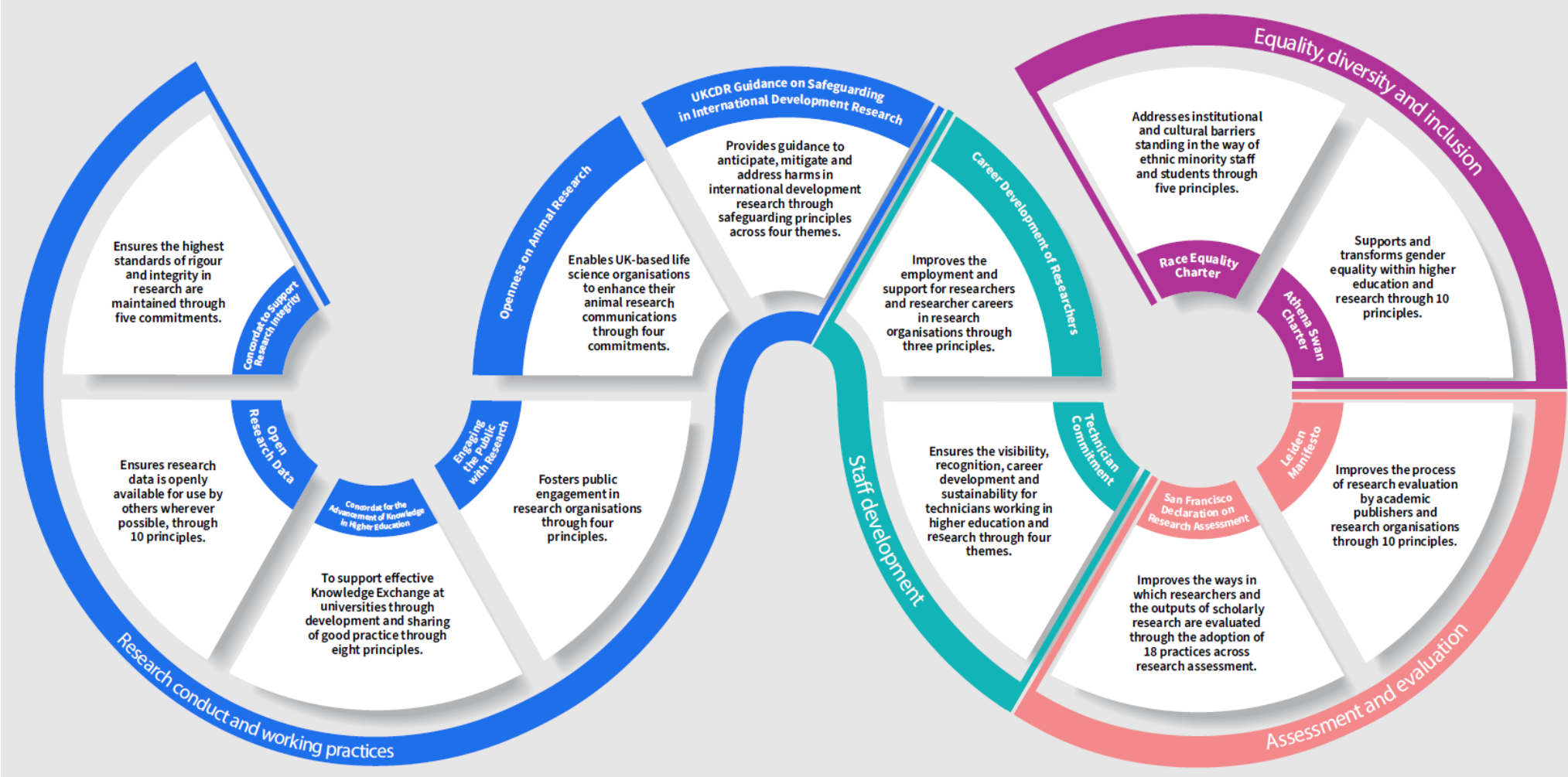


Image – The scope of the initiatives, Figure 2, Source: Phase 1 report

Method and ambition of the CAR Phase 2

Aim

Phase 2 brings together the initiative owners and the research and innovation community to look for potential future alignments to **increase influence, capacity and efficiency** across the landscape

Timeline

The project started on July 2022 and is expected to finish November 2022 with aspirations to publishing the outputs early 2023

Consultants

Consultants, Oxentia, have been jointly commissioned to undertake Phase 2 work

Phase 2 Engagements

To help shape and contextualise the report's findings, the Project Board* engaged through various 121's, meetings and workshops with:



*Fortnightly meetings between the Project Board/Consultants

**The group is comprised from the research and innovation community, approached by the initiative owners, the project board and the collective desire to have representation from the devolved nations



OXENTIA

Oxford's Global
Innovation Consultancy

Research Concordats & Agreements review - Phase II

Approach and direction of travel

Dr Hamish McAlpine, Principal Consultant, HE and Government, Oxentia Ltd.

Who we are



Sarah Allison
Senior Consultant,
Oxentia Ltd



Hamish McAlpine
Principal Consultant,
Oxentia Ltd



Britta Wyatt
Managing Consultant,
Oxentia Ltd

Oxentia are a specialist innovation consultancy. In the HE sector, we offer strategy support, training and innovation management, helping our clients develop their research & innovation strategies and activities.

Collectively, our project team has a deep understanding of the UK's R&I landscape, design of institutional systems and frameworks, and effecting cultural change in the HE sector.

The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) was created to effect a cultural change in the approach to supporting public engagement. They have developed a host of tools to assist the research community



Paul Manners
Associate Professor in Public
Engagement, UWE
Director, NCCPE

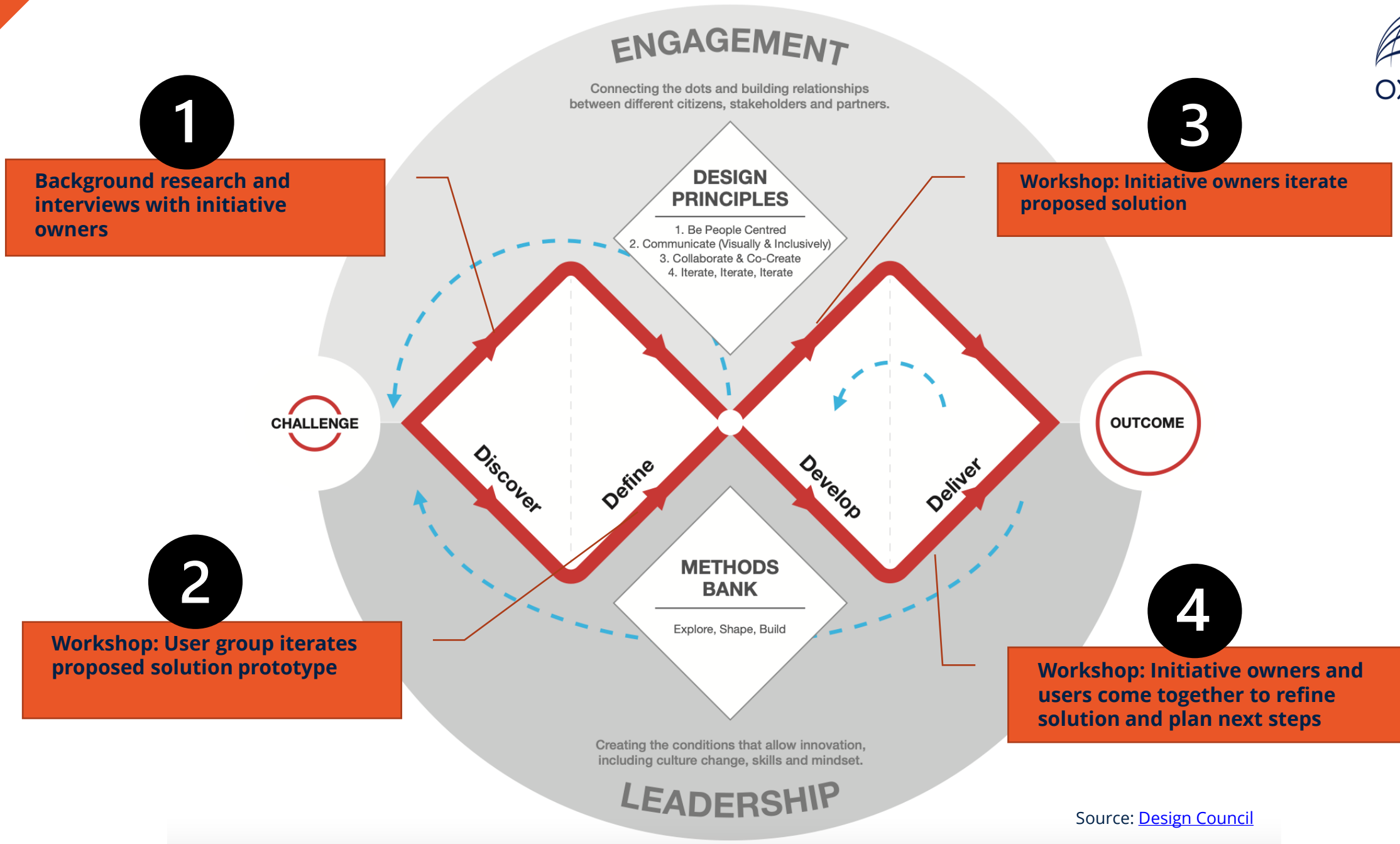


Anne Boddington
Professor (emeritus) of Design
innovation and Strategic Advisor to this
project

Aims and approach



- A ***design-led approach***, engaging 'users' and initiative owners via a series of workshops
- Dual aims – building on Phase I findings to explore potential to:
 - Reduce ***unnecessary*** burden and bureaucracy
 - Strengthen the ***link to research culture***, increasing the impact and visibility of the various concordats and initiatives
- The user group was intended to represent a ***diverse set of 'users'***:
 - Research managers responsible for implementing concordats
 - Other roles – e.g. HR, finance, senior management
 - Various levels of seniority
 - Various institutional sizes, specialisms and locations
 - Academic/researcher perspective



Findings



- ***Interviews with initiative owners***
 - A strong appetite for change
 - Concern about dilution of the impact of individual concordats
 - Recognition that the concordats/initiatives in scope are diverse in their purposes and scope, and sit in a complex landscape
- ***Workshop I (users) and II (initiative owners):***
 - High level of ambition and commitment to improve culture & environment via a more 'culture-centric' model
 - Scope for greater alignment, but concern about the detail (& whether change itself will create more work)
 - Hard to define 'good research culture' (but important to do so).
 - Importance of considering interfaces with others instruments (e.g. REF, other reporting mechanisms etc.)

Key considerations and next steps

- **Considerations**

- Interface with existing instruments – particularly REF environment/FRAP
- Research culture & environment and its relationship to **wider institutional culture**
- Differing **nature and scope** of the concordats/initiatives, e.g.,
 - A wide variety of topics addressed
 - not solely research-focussed (e.g. technicians commitment and role of technicians in teaching, or the KE Concordat)
 - Some global in nature

- **Next steps**

- 3rd workshop to continue to refine the ‘solution blueprint’
- Exploring potential for greater alignment of both inputs (e.g. data) and outputs (e.g. reporting requirements).
- Aiming for a concrete action plan, with owners and timescales

Research conduct and working practices	Concordat to Support Research Integrity						
	Open Research Data						
	Concordat for the Advancement of Knowledge Exchange in Higher Education						
	Engaging the Public with Research						
	Openness on Animal Research						
	UKCDR Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research						
Staff development	Career Development of Researchers						
	Technician Commitment						
Assessment and evaluation	San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment						
	Leiden Manifesto						
Equality, diversity and inclusion	Athena Swan Charter						
	Race Equality Charter						
		Signatory	Policy and / or plan	Annual Report	Administrative data	Training	Public and / or stakeholder information or outreach

Summary

To explore potential alignments to help reduce workload and coordinate reporting, while also complementing the work of the Independent Review of Research Bureaucracy:

- Building on the first ever mapping of initiatives and the call from the community to **find alignments for greater efficiency and capacity**
- Represent an **important and significant step forward for sector-wide collaboration and understanding on an important aspect of research culture in the UK.**
- **Outputs will be co-designed, co-developed and co-owned by the community**

Thank you

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