

# GHENT UNIVERSITY'S INTERDISCIPLINARY

## SSH-CONSORTIA

### – A TOOL TO ENHANCE THE SOCIETAL IMPACT OF RESEARCH

Austrian EU Council Presidency Conference on Impact of Social Sciences and Humanities for a European Research Agenda

Noël Klima, Ghent University, Vienna, 28/29 November 2018

# GHENT UNIVERSITY

- UGent is one of the biggest Universities in Belgium
- 11 faculties, 117 departments, 650 research institutes
- Large research community: 6500
- 42.000 students
- Shanghai ranking 2018: 61  
> best ranked Belgian University



# UGENT STIMULATES COOPERATION IN SSH

**UGent SSH experience:** high individuality of researchers, less “big” funding due to smaller groups, lack of (focused) societal value creation, ...

> New research policy framework in 2012

➤ Competitive call for consortia to strategically support several SSH disciplines

Aim: support for **bottom-up cooperation** towards research excellence through interdisciplinarity & impact



# PILOT FASE SSH-CONSORTIA

- Pilot funding 5 years for 5 consortia + coordinator
- “***Carte blanche***” to develop the consortium and to define and focus on relevant priorities
- Operate from scratch and define own mission, goals and outputs (bottom-up)
- Phase 1 (value creation) > evaluation > Phase 2 (pathways to impact – impact planning) > evaluation

# EVALUATION ON DIFFERENT LEVELS

External peer evaluation > discipline-specific

Stakeholder evaluation > consortium-specific

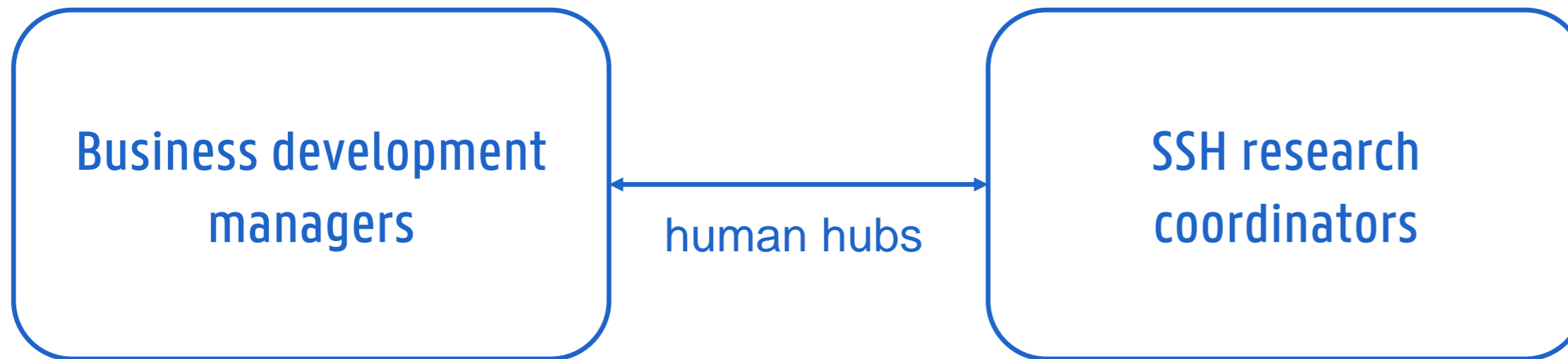
Internal evaluation > coordinator-specific

# GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS SSH-CONSORTIA

Critical mass of engaged principal professors  
Dedicated research coordinator as knowledge broker  
Sharing of knowledge and resources  
Collaboration with Research Department and EU Office



# COORDINATOR WITH A PERMANENT ASSIGNMENT



Generic expertise in research areas  
Expert on research policy, interdisciplinarity & societal impact  
Pivot point between research, research policy, funding, outreach and management  
Stakeholder network  
Own budget

# JOINT CONSORTIA PATHWAYS TO IMPACT – AN EXTRA DIMENSION

Workload: 70-80% thematic consortium + 20-30% cross-consortium activities and generic Ghent University relevant work

- Extra dimension of interdisciplinarity, knowledge & information exchange

## **Joint pathways to impact**

- Central UGent WGs
- Writing of position papers
- Organizing joint workshops, information sessions, lectures
- Joint projects
- Planning of joint interdisciplinary impact award
- ...





# LESSONS LEARNED (1)

Provide **incentives for researchers** to ensure dedication and commitment within the consortium

Ensure that researchers **engage in information and data exchange** within the consortium

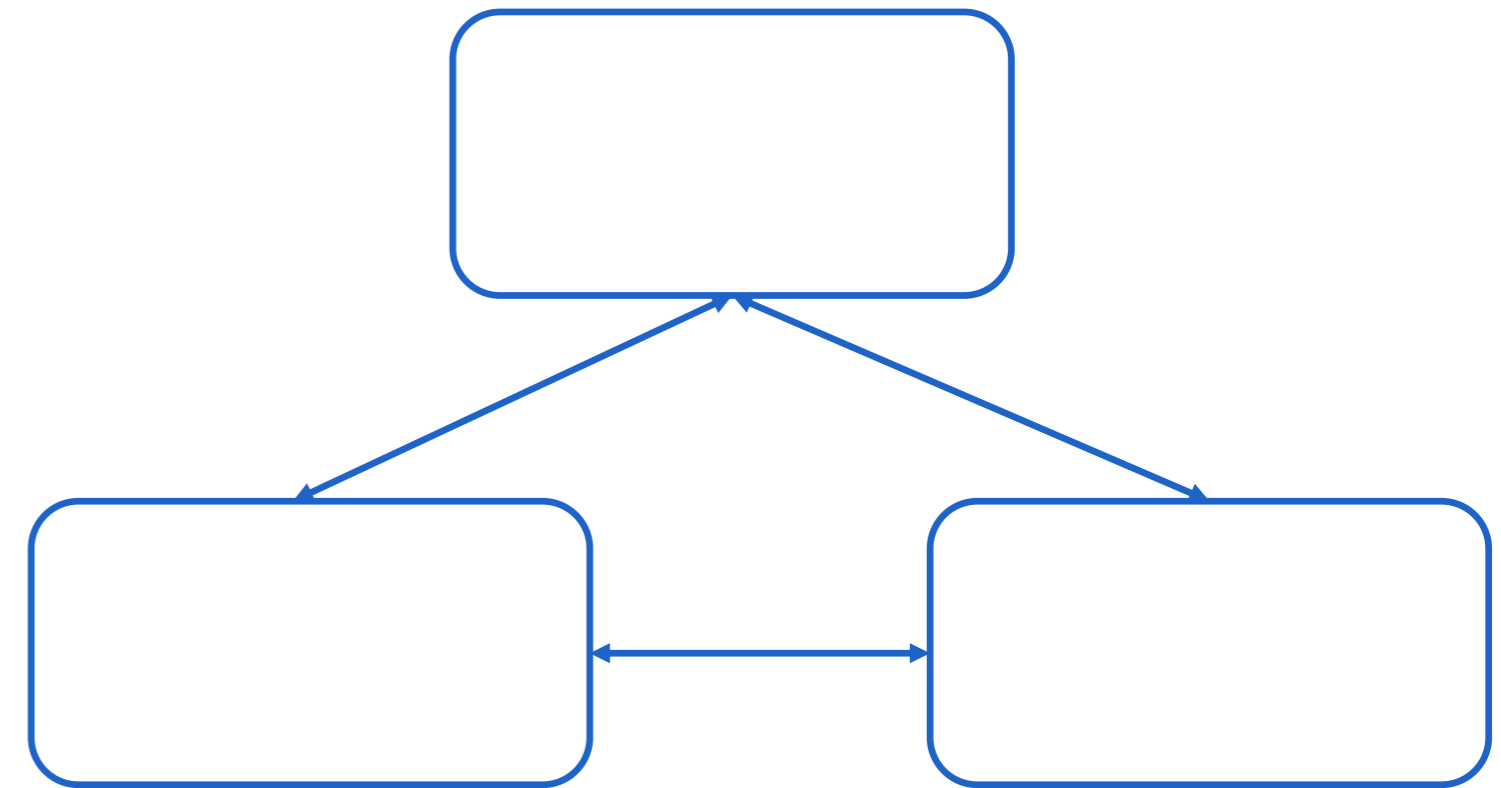
**Avoid heavy administrative burden** for the member researchers



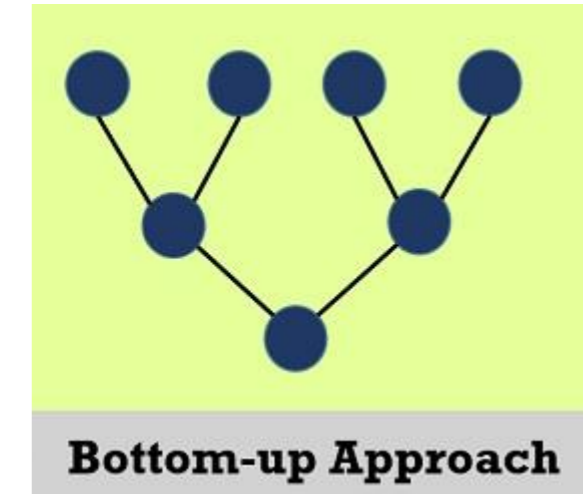
## LESSONS LEARNED (2)

Provide **enough time** during the process to build trust, dedication and commitment of all members as well as mutual recognition and understanding between coordinators, researchers and central university research (policy) departments

Make the consortia a **complementary structure** intertwined with all other structures



# LESSONS LEARNED (3)



Take the **diversity of the consortia** (bottom-up approach) into account during their evaluation

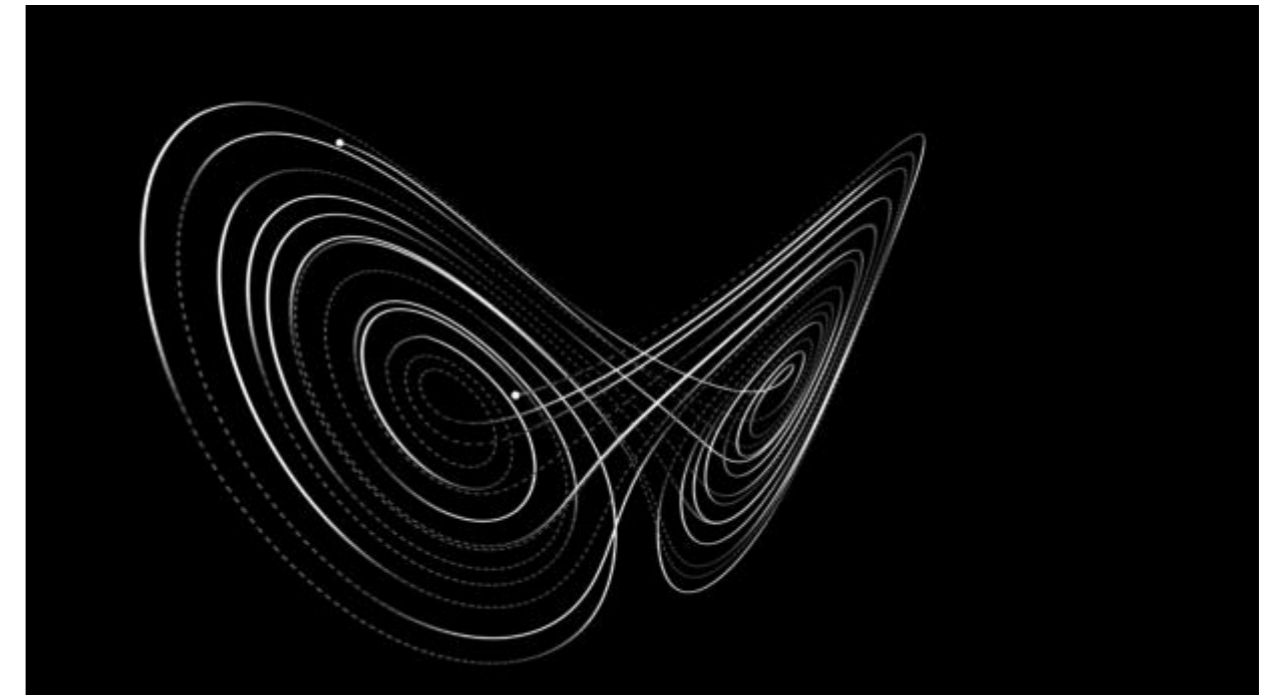
# LESSONS LEARNED (4)

Provide be a **safe position** with autonomous budget for  
the



# LESSONS LEARNED (5)

Exchange and **engage with STEM** disciplines from the start (where thematically relevant)



# FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

- 4 SSH-consortia **continue on permanent basis** embedded in the research policy structure of Ghent University
- Where relevant exchange and **cooperation with STEMM** researchers will be further stimulated
- **Enhancement of impact literacy** among researchers and informing research policy at university and EU level
- **Enlargement** to 10 consortia
- Consortia and Research Department will continue to exchange and **develop knowledge on impact measurement**

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<https://www.ugent.be/en/research/research-ugent/trackrecord/idcs.htm>