Project acronym: BETTER Life

Title: Bringing Excellence to Transformative Socially Engaged Research in Life Sciences through Integrated Digital Centers

Project number: 101071314

Deliverable 5.3

Self-Assessment Tool Pilots and Report

Description: BETTER Life Self-Assessment Tool Pilots and Report presents the piloting and refinement of a digital Self-Assessment Tool designed to support researchers in evaluating and enhancing the social engagement of their research activities.

Lead party for deliverable: Helixconnect Europe

Document type: DEM

Due date of deliverable: 31. 05. 2025

Dissemination level: PU

Authors: Emilia Binchiciu, Adrian Solomon, Aleksandra Rankov

Funded by the European Union

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Deliverable Information	
Title	Self-Assessment Tool Pilots and Report
Deliverable number	5.3
WP number	5
Lead beneficiary	Helixconnect Europe
Author(s)	Dr. Eng. Emilia Binchiciu, dr. Adrian Solomon, Dr. Aleksandra Rankov
Type	DEM
Dissemination Level	PU
Delivery date	31. 05. 2025

Project information	
Title	Bringing Excellence to Transformative Socially Engaged Research in Life Sciences through Integrated Digital Centers
Acronym	BETTER Life
Project no.	101071314
Type of Action	HORIZON Coordination and Support Actions
Website	www.betterlifehorizon.eu

History of Changes

Version	Date	Comment	Revised by
Version 0.1	20. 05. 2025	First draft – content definition	Emilia Binchiciu
Version 0.2	24. 05. 2025	Second draft – feedback implemented according to the last piloting results	Adrian Solomon, Aleksandra Rankov
Version 0.3	30. 05. 2025	Final version – last check and refinement	Aleksandra Rankov, Patrik Toula, Emilia Binchiciu

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Definition
HLX	Helixconnect Europe
ECR	Early Career Researcher
HEI	Higher Education Institution
SER	Socially Engaged Research
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises

Executive Summary

The BETTER Life project's Deliverable 5.3 presents the development, piloting, and refinement of a digital **Self-Assessment Tool** for **Socially Engaged Research (SER)** (https://www.better-life-digital.eu/tools-self-assesment-tool/), specifically tailored for Early Career Researchers (ECRs) in the life sciences. Led by **EDUCONS**, with support from **ACEEU**, **HLX**, and all consortium members, the tool is hosted on the **EU BETTER Life Digital Centre** platform (https://www.better-life-digital.eu/) and represents a milestone in operationalizing SER standards developed in WP3. The **BETTER Life SA** tool integrates a guided questionnaire and CV analysis to assess a researcher's current engagement with society, providing **personalised diagnostics**, visual feedback, and tailored recommendations. It is designed to be anonymous, GDPR-compliant, and user-friendly, avoiding the collection of personally identifiable information.

Key features include:

- A **diagnostic survey** using real-time analytics to measure engagement across four key SER dimensions.
- A **CV analysis module** employing TF-IDF and clustering to map the presence of SER-related activities and terms.
- A **resource recommendation dashboard**, offering tools and learning materials aligned with individual profiles.
- An evolving **feedback system** to gather user insights and continuously improve the tool.

The tool was tested by ECRs from across Europe, aiming to reach **at least 400 users**. Although we haven't reached the target of 400 pilot users yet, the feedback received from approximately 200 participants has already provided a valuable and consistent picture of the tool's strengths and areas for improvement. The responses collected offer clear guidance on how to make the self-assessment tool more user-friendly and more actionable.

Results analysis shows:

- **High user satisfaction** with platform accessibility and question clarity.
- **Increased awareness** of SER concepts among participants.

- Key **areas for improvement**, such as better explanation of CV analysis results, more practical examples, and enhanced inclusivity for non-academic stakeholders.

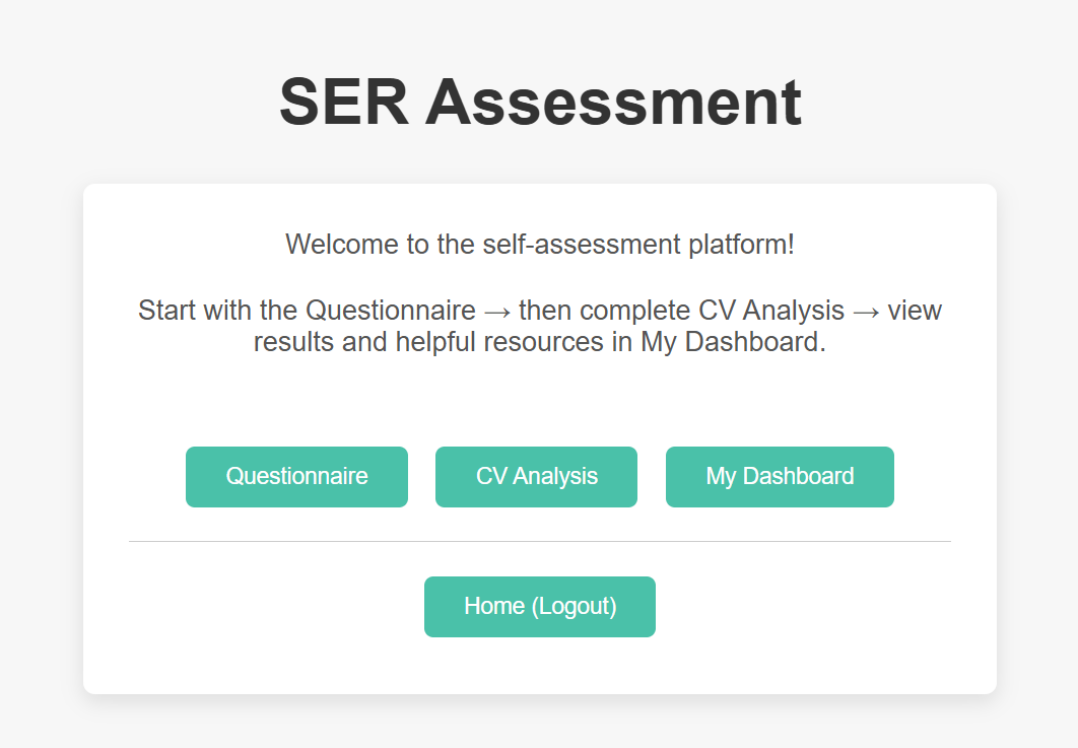
Feedback suggests the following improvements:

- Enhance **interpretation guidance** for analytical results.
- Provide **discipline-specific resources** and SER action steps.
- Broaden accessibility beyond academia, e.g., for policy and community practitioners.
- Develop a **descriptive SER CV template** to supplement standard academic CVs.
- Plan for **AI integration** to enable dynamic learning and advanced resource personalisation.

The Self-Assessment Tool is a promising innovation in supporting SER capacity-building. It empowers researchers to self-reflect, access customised resources, and align their work with societal needs. With further refinements, it holds the potential to become a cornerstone of institutional SER strategies and culture across Europe.

1. Introduction

Socially Engaged Research (SER) represents a paradigm shift in the way scientific knowledge is produced and applied, particularly within the life sciences. It emphasizes collaboration with societal stakeholders, ethical responsibility, and responsiveness to real-world challenges. Recognizing the growing importance of SER across European research and innovation ecosystems, the **BETTER Life project** has taken a proactive step in developing tools that support researchers—particularly Early Career Researchers (ECRs)—in evaluating and improving the societal relevance and impact of their work. Deliverable 5.3 builds on the foundational standards for SER developed in Work Package 3 (WP3). It operationalizes these standards by introducing a digital **Self-Assessment Tool** hosted on the BETTER Life EU Digital Centre. This tool is designed to facilitate self-assessment, skills development, and action planning for ECRs across Europe and beyond.



This deliverable focuses on the **design, piloting, and evaluation** of the SER Self-Assessment Tool, along with a roadmap for institutional integration through tailored action plans. The main objectives were achieved, namely:

- To develop an accessible, GDPR-compliant self-assessment tool for individual ECRs that offers diagnostic insights into their level of social engagement in research.
- To pilot the tool targeting researchers from both partner and non-partner institutions across Europe.
- To collect and analyse feedback from pilot users to inform the refinement of the tool's features and functionalities.
- To initiate the development of institutional action plans—one general EU-wide plan and seven tailored plans for the participating Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)—to embed SER practices structurally within academic environments.

The tool and its associated report are primarily intended for:

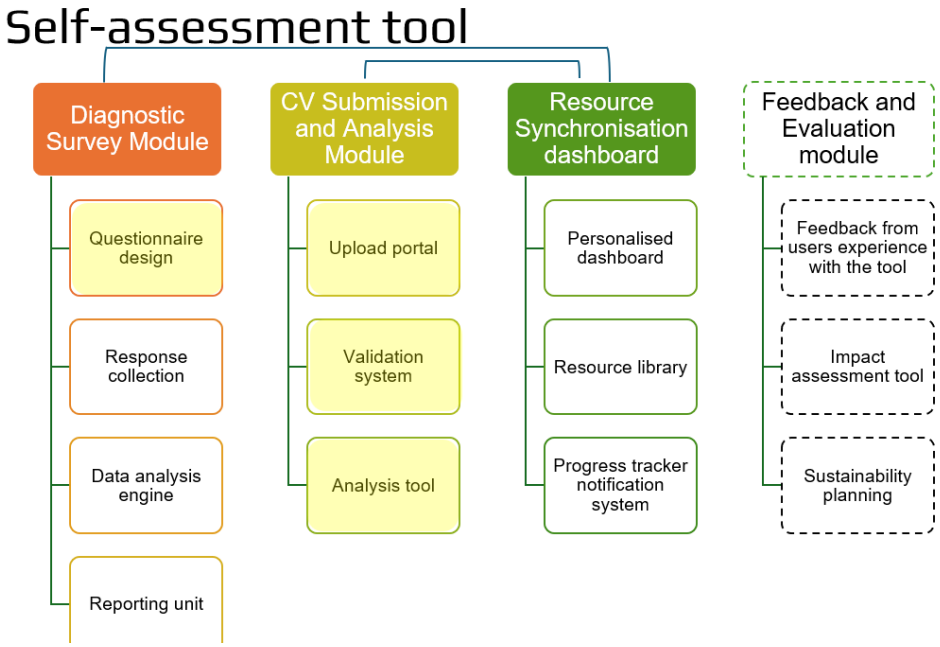
- **Early Career Researchers (ECRs)** in life sciences seeking to align their research with societal needs.
- **Research managers, SER facilitators, and academic leaders** tasked with building institutional capacity for engaged research.
- **Policy makers and funding bodies** looking for tools and frameworks that support responsible research and innovation (RRI) across Europe.

The report is structured to provide the overview of the tool's development, technical architecture, and functionality, followed by insights gathered during the piloting phase. It concludes with recommendations for future improvement and outlines preliminary elements of institutional action planning.

2. Tool Design and Architecture

The Self-Assessment Tool for Socially Engaged Research (SER) in Life Sciences was developed with a strong emphasis on usability, ethical data management, and responsiveness to the diverse needs of Early Career Researchers (ECRs). The following principles guided its design:

- **User-Centered Design:** The tool was developed with input from researchers to ensure an intuitive, accessible, and low-barrier experience.
- **GDPR Compliance:** The system is built to function without storing personal data. No email verification is required, and users are explicitly instructed not to upload identifying information.
- **Anonymity and Inclusivity:** All interactions remain anonymous, allowing for open, honest reflection without compromising user privacy.
- **Scalability and Modularity:** The tool is structured to accommodate updates, additional modules, and advanced features, such as AI-driven recommendations, in future iterations.



The tool comprises several integrated modules that work together to assess SER engagement and provide tailored feedback:

- **Diagnostic Survey Module:** Presents a structured questionnaire divided into key SER dimensions, using a point-based scoring system to assess the researcher's level of engagement.
- **CV Submission and Analysis Module:** Allows users to upload their CVs, which are processed using natural language processing (NLP) techniques to identify SER-related content.
- **Resource Synchronisation Dashboard:** Provides dynamic recommendations based on the user's results, such as toolkits, guidelines, or further reading.
- **Progress Tracker:** Enables users to monitor their engagement journey, including survey completion, CV submission, and interaction with resources.

To ensure performance, flexibility, and future enhancement potential, the tool was built using the following technology stack:

- **Backend: Django (Python Framework):** Handles web logic, user interaction, data processing, and integration with the CV analysis engine.
- **Frontend: HTML, CSS, JavaScript:** Powers the user interface and enhances interactivity without requiring page reloads.
- **Data Analysis: Jupyter Notebooks & PubMedBERT:** Used for domain-specific NLP to analyse CV content and generate visual outputs (e.g., word clouds, bar graphs).
- **Visualisation Libraries:** Tools such as Plotly and Bokeh were employed for interactive visual displays.

In alignment with GDPR and ethical research practices:

- No actual email addresses or user-identifying information is stored.
- Users are advised not to upload identifiable data in their CVs.
- Session continuity is enabled using non-validated usernames.
- Feedback forms are anonymised, and results are analysed in aggregate.

This privacy-by-design approach ensures maximum user trust and compliance while promoting broad uptake across diverse research communities.

3. Diagnostic Survey Module

The **Diagnostic Survey Module** is a core component of the SER Self-Assessment Tool. It is designed to evaluate a researcher's current level of social engagement across several predefined dimensions aligned with the standards for Socially Engaged Research (SER) in life sciences. The survey consists of structured, thematic questions, grouped into key engagement areas:

- Community and stakeholder involvement
- Ethical and responsible research practices
- Societal impact and dissemination
- Inclusion, diversity, and accessibility in research

Each question is scored using a point-based system. Responses are aggregated into four **Engagement Dimensions**, and final scores are categorized into five levels: **Very Low – Low – Medium – High – Very High.** These scores help users reflect on their current SER practices and identify areas for development.

The diagnostic tool organizes user input into four engagement dimensions:

1. **Awareness and Understanding of SER**
2. **Application of SER in Research Practices**
3. **Collaboration with Non-Academic Stakeholders**
4. **Reflection and Future Planning**

Each dimension is rated independently. Results are visually represented using bar graphs and dashboards, providing an immediate overview of strengths and areas needing attention.

Upon completion, the survey generates a **personalized feedback report** that includes:

- Engagement level per dimension
- Summary of identified strengths
- Suggested areas for improvement
- General recommendations for advancing SER integration

Users are encouraged to explore additional resources via the linked dashboard based on their score profile.

Dashboard and Progress Tracker

The tool features a **Progress Tracker**, giving users an overview of their assessment journey:

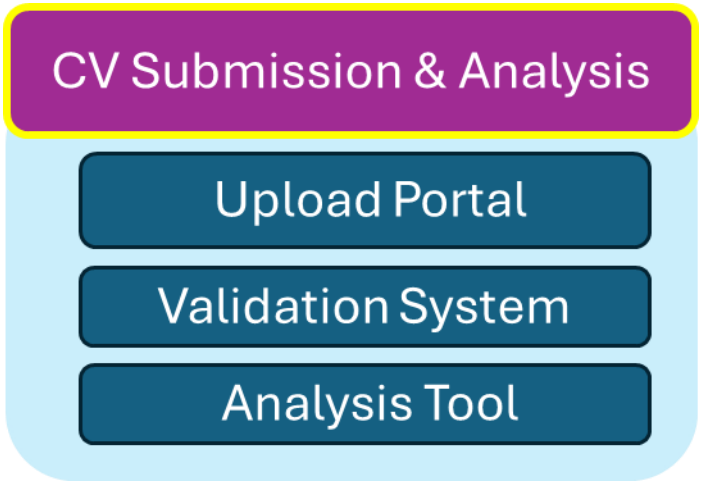
- Survey completion percentage
- CV upload status
- Optional comparative feedback (e.g., how their SER engagement compares to peer users)

4. CV Analysis Module

The **CV Analysis Module** complements the diagnostic survey by offering a content-based evaluation of a researcher's documented activities and outputs. Users upload their CVs in PDF format, which are then processed into a searchable corpus. The tool uses a predefined SER keyword dictionary—featuring terms such as *community engagement*, *policy impact*, *inclusion*, *ethics*, and *co-creation*—to extract relevant content.

To prepare the data for analysis, the CVs undergo:

- **Tokenisation:** Breaking text into manageable elements.
- **Stop-word removal:** Filtering out commonly used non-informative words.
- **Lemmatization:** Standardizing words to their base forms for better comparison.
- **Embedding generation:** Using **PubMedBERT** to ensure semantic understanding tailored to life sciences terminology.



TF-IDF Methodology and PubMedBERT Use

The tool applies the **TF-IDF** (Term Frequency–Inverse Document Frequency) method to identify and quantify the significance of SER-related terms within each CV:

- **Term Frequency (TF):** Measures how often a specific term appears in the document.
- **Inverse Document Frequency (IDF):** Evaluates how unique that term is across the corpus of CVs.

By combining TF and IDF scores, the system can highlight the most meaningful SER indicators per researcher. **PubMedBERT**, a language model fine-tuned for biomedical and life sciences research, enhances term relevance detection and semantic accuracy.

After TF-IDF scoring, CVs are clustered using machine learning techniques such as **K-means** and **Principal Component Analysis (PCA)**. This allows the tool to:

- Identify patterns of SER engagement.
- Group similar CVs for benchmarking.
- Assign an overall **engagement score** reflecting both frequency and relevance of SER terms.

The resulting score is integrated with the survey results to generate a comprehensive engagement profile.

The tool uses intuitive visuals to help users interpret their results:

- **Word Clouds:** Display frequent SER-related terms in the uploaded CV.
- **Bar Charts and Heatmaps:** Show distribution and intensity of SER engagement by category.
- **Cluster Visualisation:** Illustrates how a user's CV aligns with broader engagement patterns among peers.

Limitations and Improvement Potential

While the CV Analysis Module provides valuable insights, several limitations are acknowledged:

- **Limited CV dataset** during the pilot phase may reduce the precision of clustering and keyword prediction.
- **Lack of user understanding** of the analysis process was frequently reported in feedback, pointing to the need for improved guidance and interpretation tools.
- **Static rules-based recommendations** currently limit the tool's adaptability to different disciplines and career stages.

5. Piloting and User Feedback

The piloting of the SER Self-Assessment Tool was a crucial phase to validate its usability, relevance, and impact among Early Career Researchers (ECRs) in the life sciences. We have reached 202 tests conducted by young researchers, and the following summary highlights the insights gathered: although we have not yet achieved our target of 400 pilot users, the feedback from around 200 participants has already provided a valuable and coherent picture of the tool's strengths and areas for improvement. The responses offer clear and actionable guidance on enhancing the tool's user-friendliness and overall utility. We are continuing to promote the tool and broaden its user base, while also implementing improvements based on the current user feedback to increase its relevance and effectiveness. Recruitment occurred through institutional channels, academic networks, workshops, and SER-focused events. Participants were encouraged to:

- Complete the **diagnostic survey**
- Upload their **CVs for analysis**
- Interact with the **resource dashboard**
- Provide **feedback** on their experience using an embedded or follow-up survey (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc3YV0NToY8r8WaOKKdUFRv7-p75hOSFuch93l5rhUvtul0-w/viewform). The pilot was conducted in alignment with GDPR and ensured user anonymity throughout.

Participant Demographics

While the tool maintains user anonymity, a sampling of voluntarily provided data revealed:

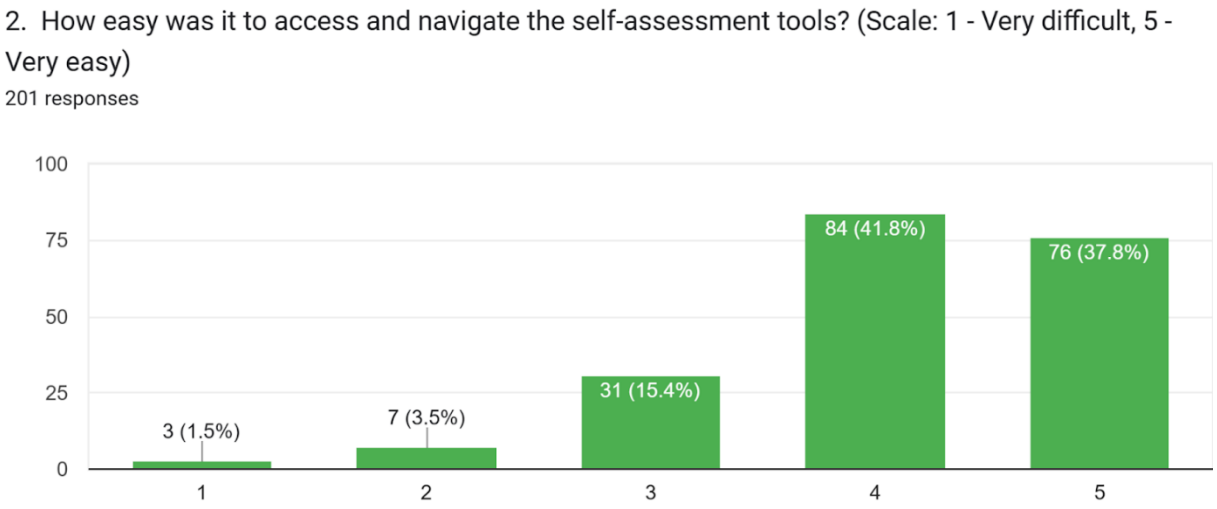
- A diverse group of **ECRs from multiple countries**, including all partner institutions.
- Representation across **varied sub-fields** in life sciences (e.g., agriculture, environmental science, biomedicine).
- Inclusion of both researchers **familiar and unfamiliar** with the concept of socially engaged research.

1. Please select the name of your institution from the list below. If your institution is not listed, please select "Other" and specify the name of your institution and/or your country in the field that will appear.	NO.
Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CZU), Czechia	22
Daugavpils Universitate (DU), Latvia	40
Educons University (Educons), Serbia	60
Estonian University of Life Sciences (EMU), Estonia	8
Helixconnect (HLX), Romania	6
HEMEXPO (Greece)	1
IOAN SLAVICI UNIVERSITY	4
Ioan Slavici University Romania	1
Ioan Slavici University Romania	1
Isim Timisoara	1
Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg (MLU), Germany	26
Medical University Poznan	1
Mickiewicz University Poznan	1
National R&D Institute for Welding and Material Testing	1
National R&D Institute for Welding and Material Testing (ISIM) Romania	1
None	1
Poznań University of Life Sciences	1
Poznan University of Life Sciences (PULS), Poland	12
Poznań university of medical sciences	1
Universitatea Politehnica Timisoara	1
University of Camerino (UCAM), Italy	2
Univerzitet u Novom Sadu	8
UPT	1
Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences (UPWr), Poland	1
Grand Total	**202**

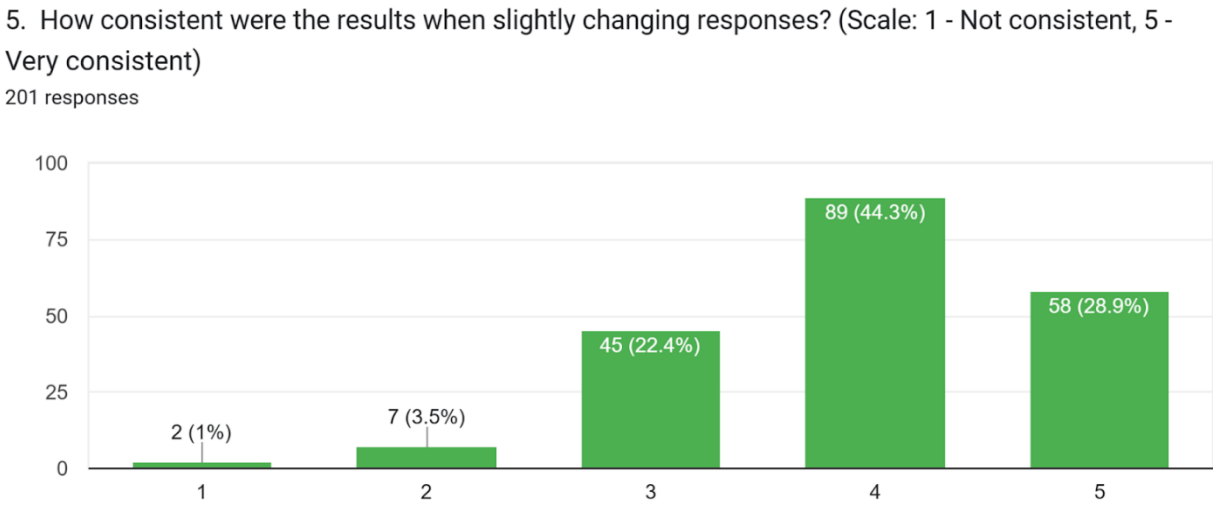
This diversity ensured that feedback captured both experienced users' needs for depth and newcomers' needs for clarity and guidance.

Results and Insights

Our findings from the pilot phase were overwhelmingly positive, importantly, around 83% of respondents confirmed that the questions and assessment criteria were clear and relevant, while the average usefulness score for understanding the role of socially engaged science (SER) was 3.91/5. Approximately 65–70% of participants acknowledged receiving specific and helpful recommendations on how to apply SER in their careers. Our piloting insights were mostly positive, highlighting several key trends:



The key aspects of the tool that participants found most beneficial. It highlights what worked well during the pilot phase, drawing attention to the tool's usability, relevance, and perceived value for young researchers. The following section highlights the **core strengths** of the self-assessment tool as identified by young researchers during the pilot phase.



It summarizes the aspects of the tool that were particularly effective and appreciated, providing a clear understanding of what is currently working well and resonating with users:

- **Ease of Use:** Users rated platform accessibility and navigation highly (average ~4.5/5).
- **Clarity of Questions:** Survey items were generally seen as relevant and well-formulated.
- **Awareness Raising:** Many researchers reported increased understanding of SER after using the tool.
- **Actionable Output:** Personalized feedback and recommendations were appreciated.
- **Recommendation Rate:** A significant proportion of users indicated they would recommend the tool to peers.

The **challenges section** delves into the issues and limitations uncovered through user feedback. It identifies areas where the tool fell short of user expectations or where improvements are needed, offering a balanced perspective to inform future development and refinement.

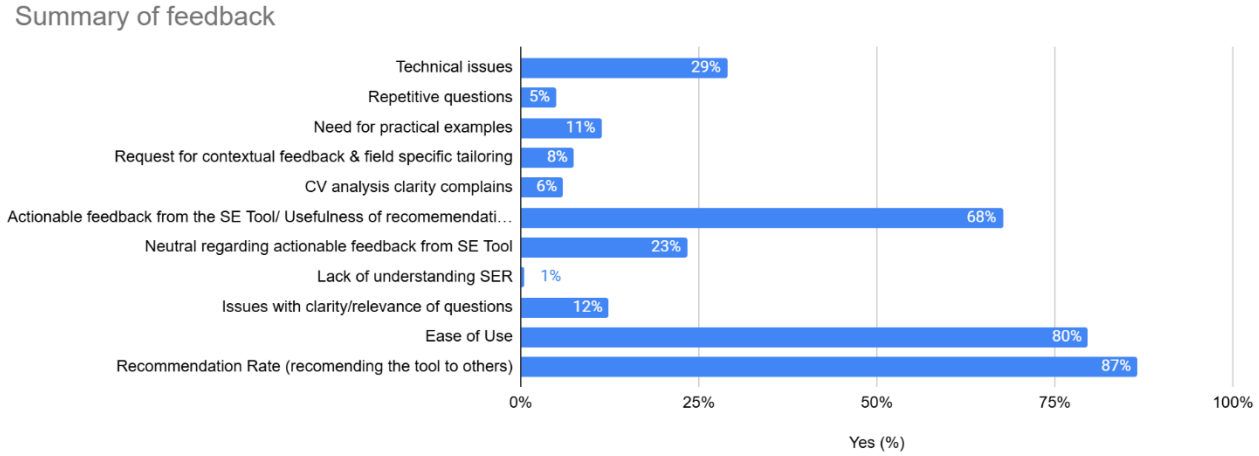
- **CV Analysis Understanding:** Many participants struggled to interpret word clouds and category scores without guidance.
- **Overlapping Questions:** A few users flagged the survey as repetitive in places.
- **Technical Hiccups:** Minor issues with login (password rules) and document uploads were reported, particularly among early users.
- **Lack of Contextualization:** Users requested examples and clearer links between their results and practical follow-up actions.

- **Tool Limitations for Non-Academic Roles:** Respondents in policy, community, or applied research roles felt the tool was overly tailored to academic researchers.

Building on the insights from both strengths and challenges, this section presents the overarching **feedback themes and user-driven recommendations** for enhancing the tool. It lays out actionable ideas and suggested adjustments to ensure that the tool evolves to better meet the diverse needs and expectations of its growing user base. **User recommendations** included:

- **Clarify CV analysis methodology and results**, including plain-language explanations and benchmarks.
- **Expand the resource dashboard** with discipline-specific tools, case studies, and how-to guides.
- **Improve guidance** with sample CVs, examples of high SER engagement, and suggestions per research phase (planning, implementation, evaluation).
- **Increase interactivity** through videos, guided reflections, and possibly a chatbot.
- **Tailor the experience** with role-specific tracks (e.g., applied researchers, senior scientists).
- **Improve user interface (UI)** with clearer instructions, progress indicators, and streamlined layout.

The pilot phase of the SER Self-Assessment Tool has validated its potential as a valuable instrument for promoting socially engaged research among early career researchers in life sciences. Building on the feedback, technical capacity, and user engagement observed so far, the next development phase will focus on refinement, scalability, and institutional integration.



To increase precision, personalisation, and relevance, upcoming iterations of the tool aim to integrate **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and advanced **Natural Language Processing (NLP)** methods:

- **Predictive Analytics:** AI will forecast user engagement patterns and offer more dynamic suggestions based on historical interactions.
- **Adaptive Feedback:** NLP models will process open-ended feedback and generate more tailored responses.
- **Intelligent Recommendations:** AI will continuously learn from user behaviour and refine resource suggestions in real-time.

These enhancements will transform the tool from a rule-based system into a more intelligent, user-responsive platform. Currently, the tool uses static keyword-to-resource matching. The envisioned upgrade will support:

- **Dynamic dashboards** that adjust recommendations based on user preferences and evolving needs.
- **Career-stage and discipline-based resource tailoring** (e.g., tools specific to biomedical researchers vs. environmental scientists).
- **Modular add-ons** for context-specific tools (ethics review planning, participatory workshop design, community co-creation models).

To address concerns about CV analysis and better capture SER-specific contributions, a **SER Descriptive CV Template** is being developed; it will:

- Encourage structured reflection on ethics, inclusion, and stakeholder engagement.
- Highlight activities often omitted in traditional CVs (e.g., informal learning, community collaborations).
- Enable more meaningful and assessable CV content for SER mapping.

The template may be introduced as a guided form within the tool or as a downloadable document to support ongoing professional development. To date, 202 ERCs have engaged with the self-assessment tool, offering valuable insights into its effectiveness and areas for growth. Although we have not yet reached the full target of 400 pilot users, the feedback received from approximately 200 participants provides a solid and consistent picture of the tool's key strengths and areas that require improvement. These insights offer clear guidance on how to make the tool more user-friendly, actionable, and relevant. Moving forward, we are actively

promoting the tool to broaden its user base and implementing targeted improvements based on this feedback to enhance its overall impact and usability.

6. Conclusion

This deliverable represents more than just the piloting of a digital self-assessment tool; it stands as a testament to our collective efforts to shift the way early career researchers perceive and embrace their roles in society. Developed through the BETTER Life project, the SER Self-Assessment Tool translates the often-abstract principles of Socially Engaged Research (SER) into a practical, accessible, and actionable resource. Through a guided self-reflection survey and innovative CV analysis, the tool not only helps researchers gauge their current level of engagement but also provides them with a clear sense of where they are and the steps, they can take next. Importantly, it does so in a way that prioritizes usability, ensures full anonymity, and aligns with GDPR standards—lowering barriers to access and fostering honest, meaningful reflection.

Although we have not yet reached our target of 400 pilot users, the insights gathered from approximately 200 participants have been invaluable. Users praised the clarity and relevance of the survey, the actionable nature of the feedback, and the increased awareness of SER practices the tool encouraged. They also provided constructive feedback—highlighting the need for clearer guidance, better contextual explanations of the results, and more tailored resources to support diverse research contexts. These suggestions will inform the next phase of the tool's development, including plans to integrate AI-driven recommendations, a structured SER CV template, and enhanced user guidance to further improve its accessibility and effectiveness. Annexes I and II support the conclusions drawn from the piloting phase and present the most up-to-date version of the self-assessment tool for early career researchers.

Ultimately, this tool is about more than assessment—it's about empowerment. It encourages researchers to reflect on how their work connects with and contributes to the world around them and equips them with the tools and resources to pursue their work in more ethical, inclusive, and collaborative ways. In doing so, it supports the creation of a stronger and more socially responsible research culture—both within Europe and beyond.

ANNEXES

Annexe I

A) BETTER Life Self-Assessment Tool

About

BETTER Life Self-Assessment Tool

The BETTER Life Self-Assessment Tool is an innovative digital platform developed within the EU BETTER Life project, designed to support researchers in evaluating and enhancing the social engagement of their research activities. For more details about the project, visit E-ZINE 2024 and Project Results.

Join us in advancing socially engaged research—try the BETTER Life Self-Assessment Tool today!

How It Works

1. **Input Submission:** Researchers upload their CV and complete a short questionnaire covering aspects of socially engaged research.
2. **Assessment Process:** The tool analyses the inputs to assess the extent to which the research aligns with principles of social engagement, using predefined indicators and benchmarks.
3. **Results & Recommendations:** The tool provides a comprehensive score indicating the level of social engagement, along with personalised recommendations for improvement.

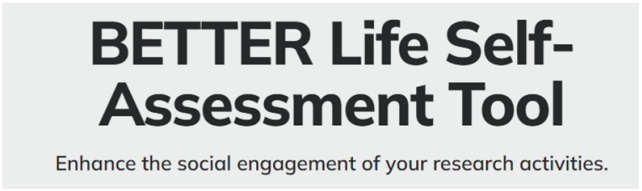
Key Features

- **Objective Evaluation:** A structured scoring system ensures consistency and fairness.
- **Actionable Feedback:** Personalized suggestions help researchers align their work with socially responsible and impactful practices.
- **User-Friendly Interface:** Intuitive design for easy input submission and result interpretation.

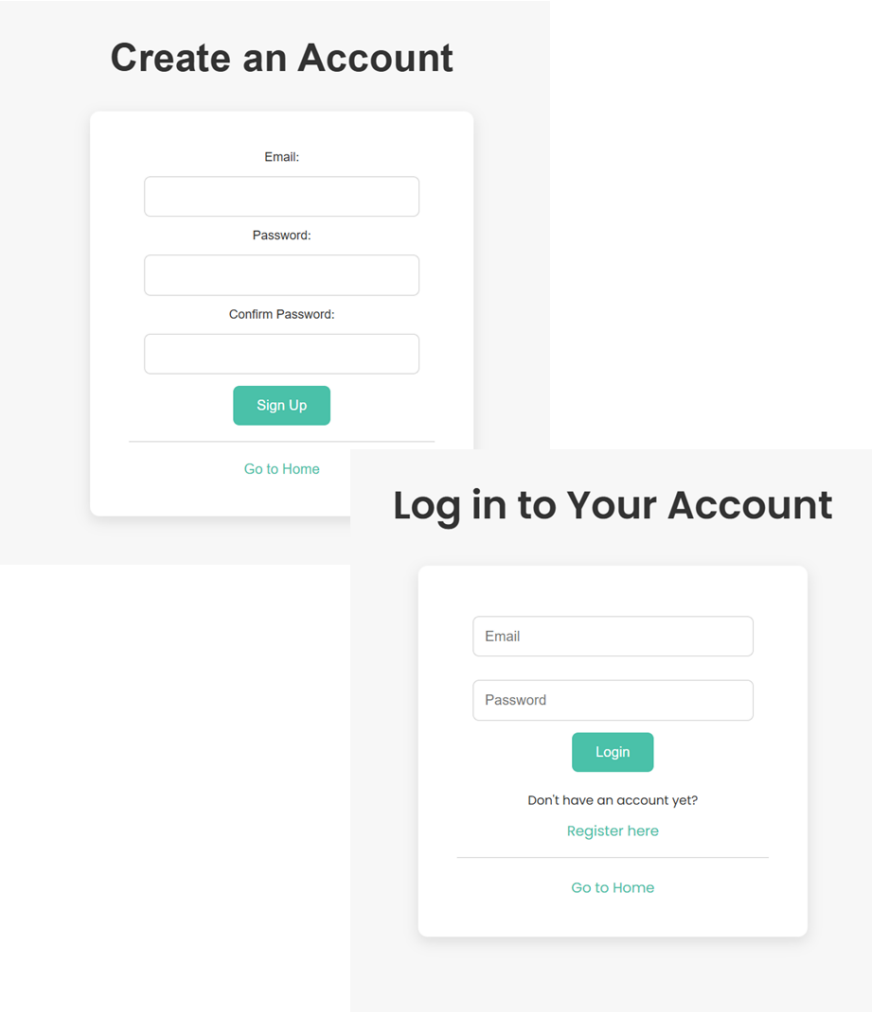
Why Use the BETTER Life Self-Assessment Tool?

- **Enhance Impact:** Improve the societal relevance and visibility of your research.
- **Professional Development:** Gain insights into areas for growth and skill development.
- **Support Excellence:** Contribute to a culture of socially responsible research aligned with EU standards.

Access the Tool



B) Registration requirements



C) GDPR alignment

To ensure privacy and ease of access, the tool does not require account verification or email confirmation. Users may enter a username in email format for session continuity, but no actual email address is stored or validated.
This approach supports GDPR compliance by avoiding the collection of personal data (e.g. real email addresses) and ensures that assessment results remain accessible during the session without verifying an identity and compromising user anonymity.

Registration requirements

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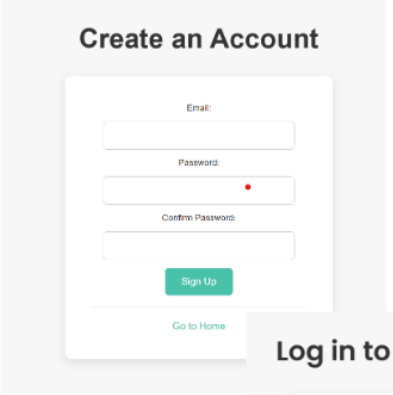
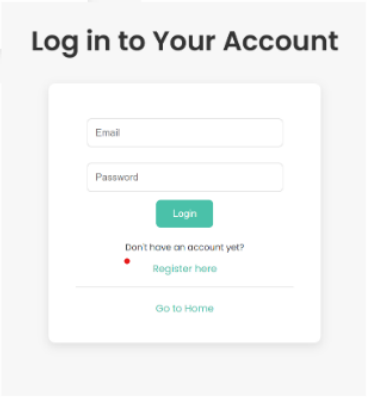
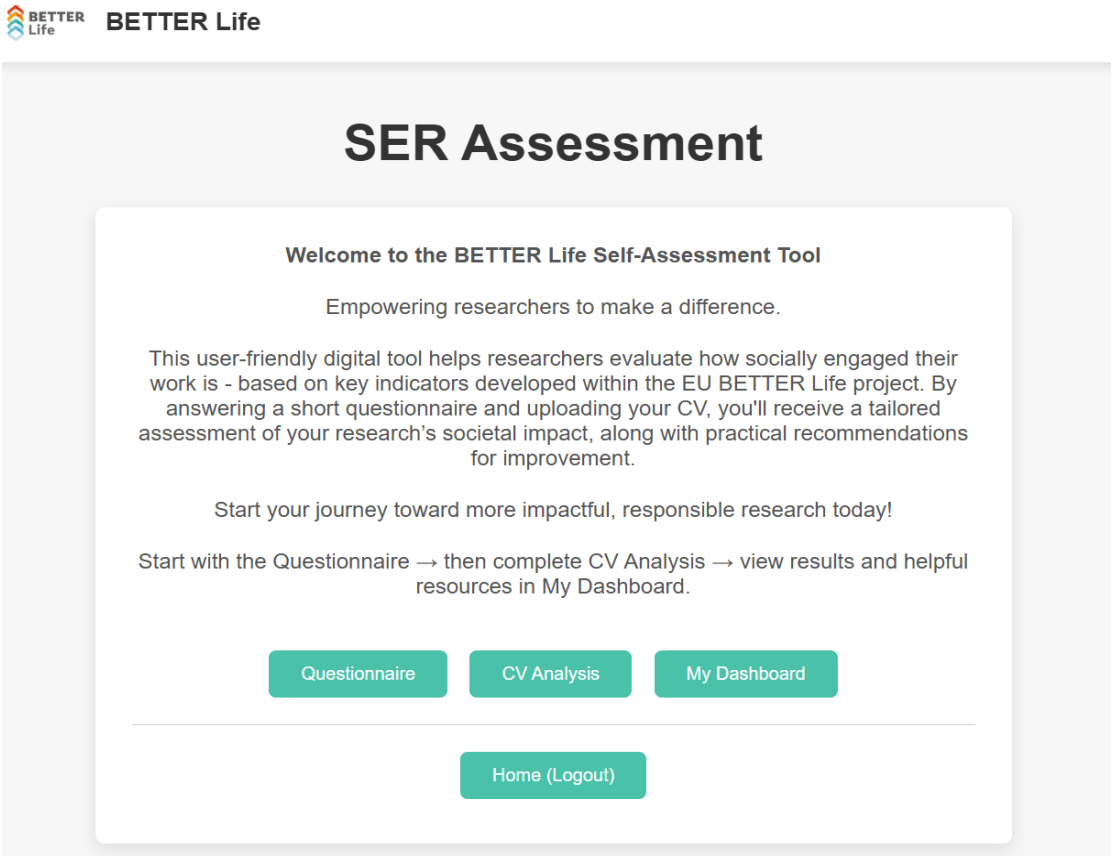
- Users are explicitly informed not to upload identifying information in CVs
- All interactions are anonymous.



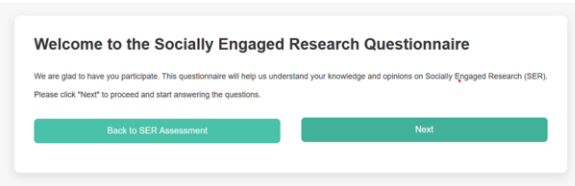


D) Landing page



E) SER Diagnostic Survey Module

The survey module uses tailored questions and real-time analytics to assess social engagement, track progress, and deliver personalised, actionable feedback.

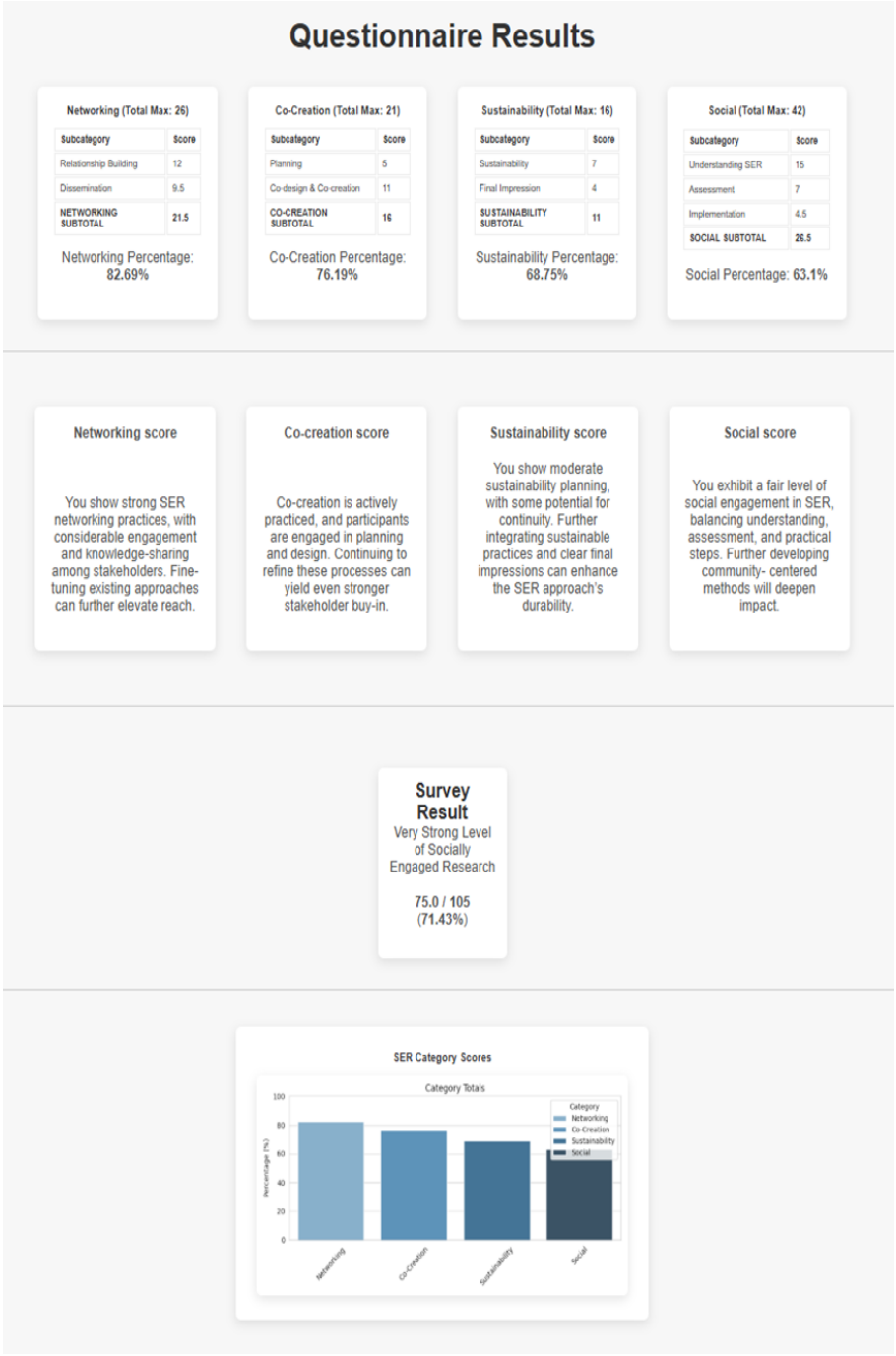


The SER Diagnostic Survey module is central to the tool, structured to evaluate the current level of social engagement across key dimensions:

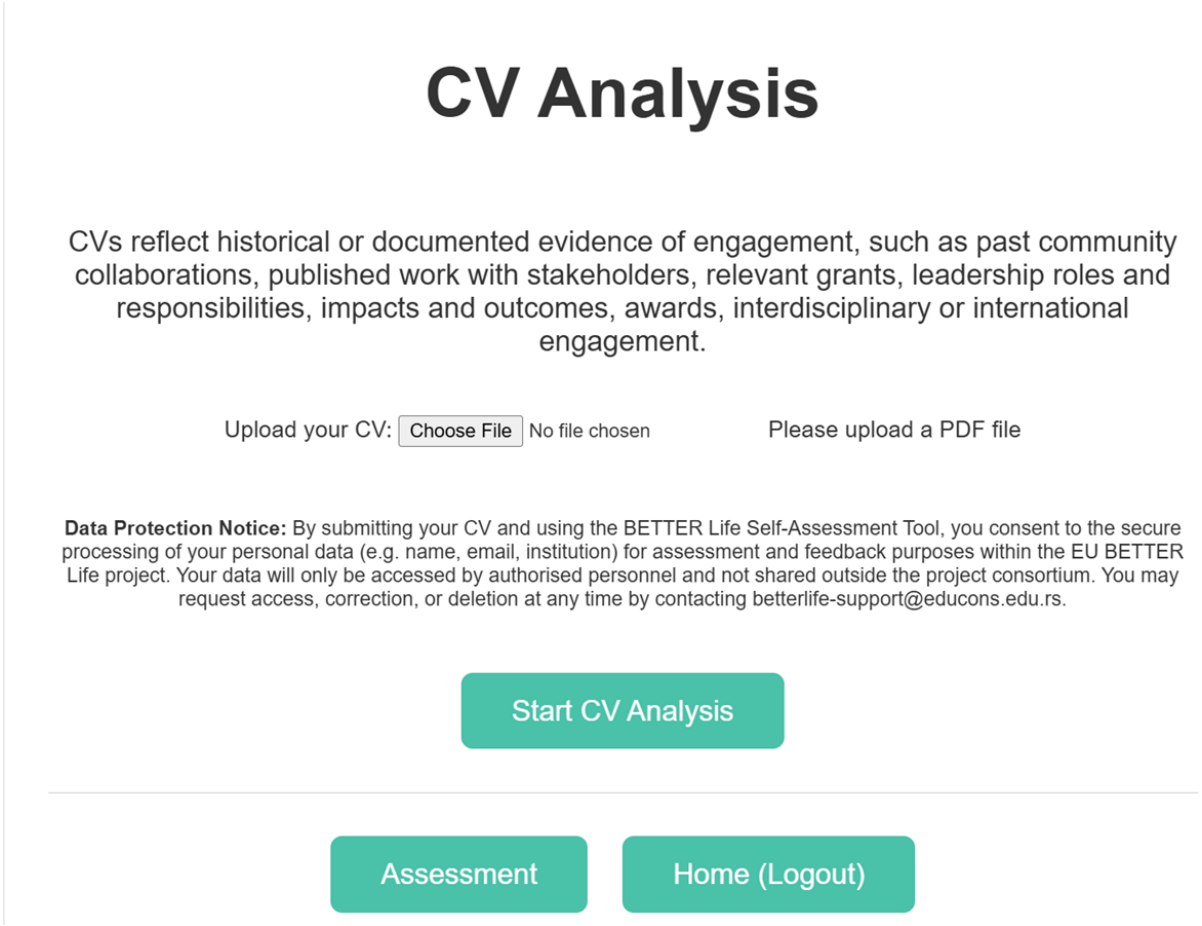
- Understanding SER: Educating users about socially engaged research.
- Planning and Relationship Building: Assessing users' strategies and collaborations.
- Co-Design and Co-Creation: Evaluating collaborative research practices.
- Implementation, Dissemination, and Assessment: Reviewing the effectiveness and outreach of research activities.
- Sustainability and Final Impressions: Highlighting long-term impact and user feedback.

F) Questionnaire result (example)

The survey is divided into key areas of socially engaged research (SER). Each question is scored using a point-based system. Scores are grouped into 4 engagement dimensions. Each dimension is rated from Very Low to Very High (5 categories).



G) CV analysis



H) Predicted scores per category

The tool analyses uploaded CVs to detect keywords linked to socially engaged research (SER), such as community engagement, ethics, or policy impact. It uses a method called TF-IDF to highlight the most meaningful terms in each CV, showing which topics are most prominent.Results are visualised through word clouds and graphs to help researchers reflect on their engagement with society.

With more CV data over time, the tool can be further refined to recognise a wider range of SER practices and provide a more tailored feedback.

This ongoing refinement will enhance the tool's value for researchers across disciplines and career stages.

Predicted Category Scores

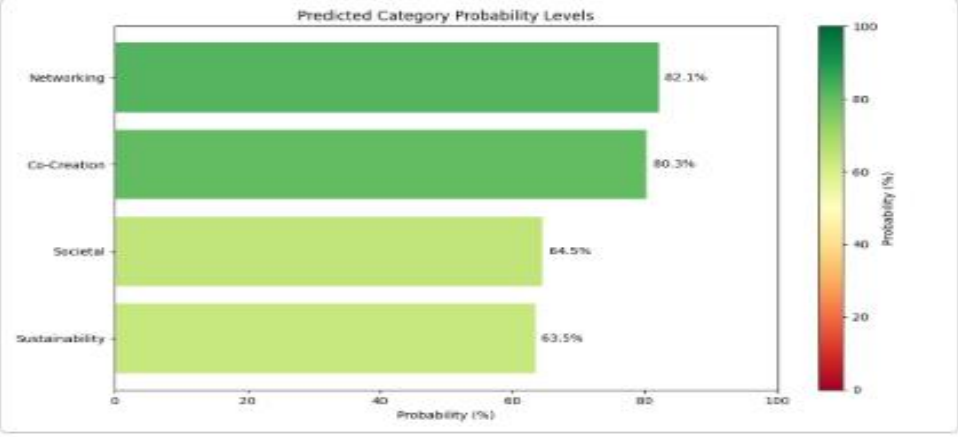
Category	Score (0-1)
Networking	82.07
Co-Creation	80.27
Sustainability	63.45
Societal	64.47

Your Personalized Word Cloud

This visual summary represents the key themes and concepts identified from your self-assessment responses and uploaded materials (e.g., CV). The word cloud highlights frequently occurring terms related to your professional experience, research focus, and engagement activities.

By visualising dominant keywords, the tool offers a quick insight into the areas where your work is most active and visible. This can help both you and potential evaluators (e.g., institutions, mentors, reviewers) better understand the alignment between your expertise and socially engaged research priorities.

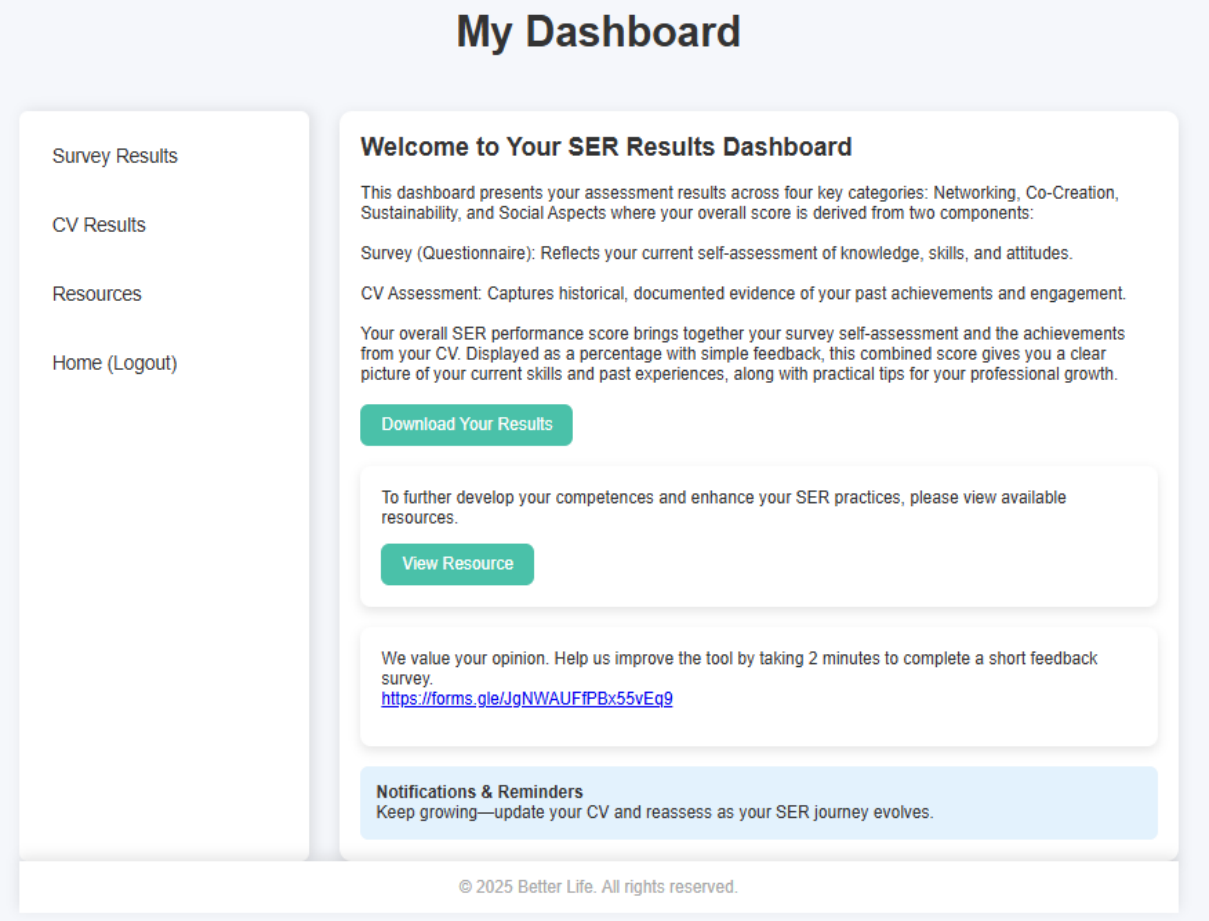
Prediction Bar Plot



I) My dashboard

My dashboard summarises the evaluation results and provides access to valuable resources.

It also provides access to a feedback form that is valuable for further enhancements of the tool.



J) Overall result

The combined result is derived from both the Questionnaire and the CV assessment. Here is shown an example score of one researcher - both the quantitative and qualitative results are displayed and recommendations for further improvements are provided.

Engagement Level 70-80%
Very Strong Socially Engaged Research Practices
Description & Explanation
• Document and share best practices within and beyond the research team. • Mentor other researchers in socially engaged research principles. • Actively seek collaborative funding opportunities with community partners and consult funding guidance available at the Better Life Digital Centre of Excellence. • Explore the following tool: https://www.better-life-digital.eu/tools-mentoring-plan/ . • At this level, researchers actively lead and mentor others in socially engaged research practices.
Recommendations
• **Mentoring and Leadership**: Begin mentoring new researchers in the principles of socially engaged research, helping to build a culture of collaboration and inclusion within your institution or community. • **Seek Collaborative Funding**: Look for funding opportunities that specifically support community-driven research projects. Partner with stakeholders to apply for grants or other financial resources, ensuring that the community has a financial stake in the research outcomes. • **Best Practice Documentation**: Actively document and share best practices within your team and the broader research community to help others learn from your experiences.
Conceptual Explanation:
Mentorship helps to spread the principles of socially engaged research across the academic community. By leading by example, experienced researchers can shape the next generation of scholars who prioritize community collaboration and ethical engagement.

Evaluation results on SER are classified in 10 categories:

Engagement level	**Descriptive result**
0-10%	Very Low Level of Socially Engaged Research
10-20%	Low Level of Socially Engaged Research
20-30%	Basic Engagement Level in Socially Engaged Research
30-40%	Moderate Level of Socially Engaged Research
40-50%	Fairly Socially Engaged Research
50-60%	Good Level of Socially Engaged Research
60-70%	Strong Socially Engaged Research Practices
70-80%	Very Strong Socially Engaged Research Practices
80-90%	Excellent Socially Engaged Research
90-100%	Outstanding Level of Socially Engaged Research

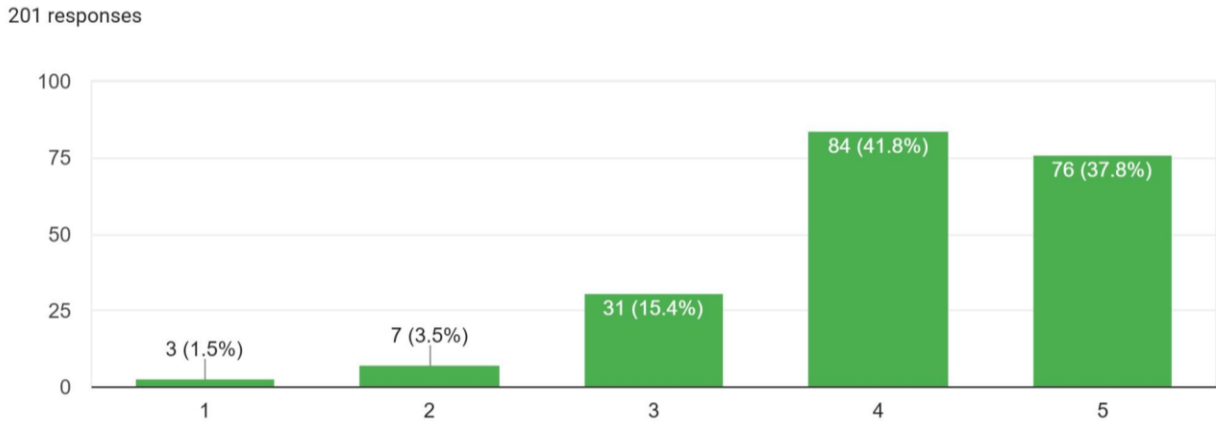
ANNEX II

Feedback survey results

1. Please select the name of your institution from the list below. If your institution is not listed, please select "Other" and specify the name of your institution and/or your country in the field that will appear.	No.
Czech University of Life Sciences (CZU) Czechia	22
Daugavpils Universitate (DU) Latvia	40
Educons University (Educons)	60
Estonian University of Life Sciences (EMU) Estonia	8
Helixconnect (HLX) Romania	6
HEMEXPO (Greece)	1
IOAN SLAVICI UNIVERSITY	4
Ioan Slavici University Romania	1
Ioan Slavici University Romania	1
Isim Timisoara	1
Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg (MLU) Germany	26
Medical University Poznan	1
Mickiewicz University Poznan	1
National R&D Institute for Welding and Material Testing	1
National R&D Institute for Welding and Material Testing (ISIM) Romania	1
none	1
Poznań University of Life Sciences	1
Poznan University of Life Sciences (UPz) Poland	12
Poznań university of medical sciences	1
Universitatea Politehnica Timisoara	1
University of Camerino (UCAM) Italy	2
Univerzitet u Novom Sadu	8
UPT	1
Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences (UPWr) Poland	1
Grand Total	**202**

Questions of the survey:

I. **How easy was it to access and navigate the self-assessment tools?** (Scale: 1 - Very difficult, 5 - Very easy)



II. **Did you encounter any technical issues while using the tools? If so, please describe them.**

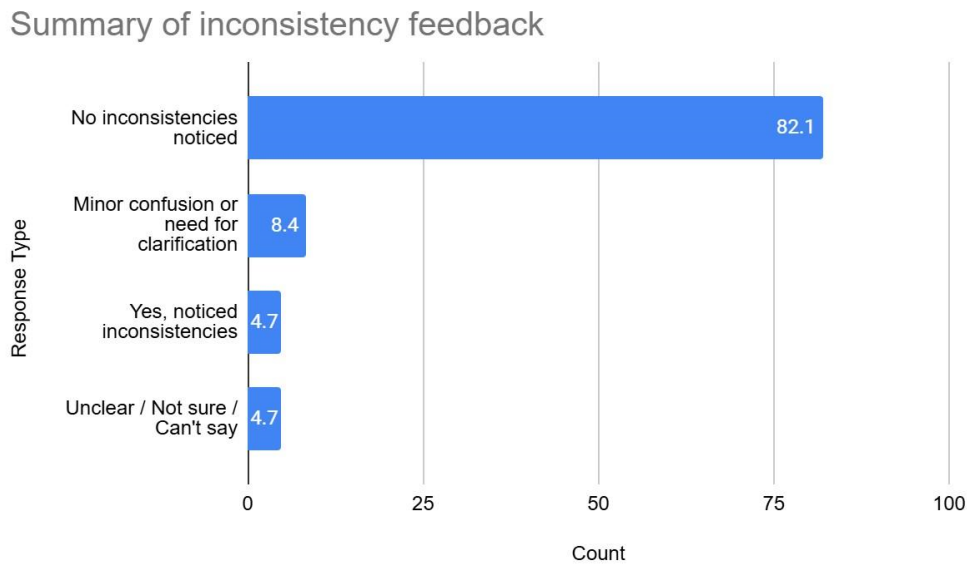
Response type	Count	Description
No technical issues reported	69%	Clear “no” - everything worked fine
Yes, reported and described issues	17%	Users explicitly mentioned an issue such as login problems/first time access, file upload errors or delayed access
Unclear response	14%	Vague responses difficult to categorise them - (e.g. a little problem with access)

III. **Were the questions and assessment criteria clear and relevant to the intended topic?**

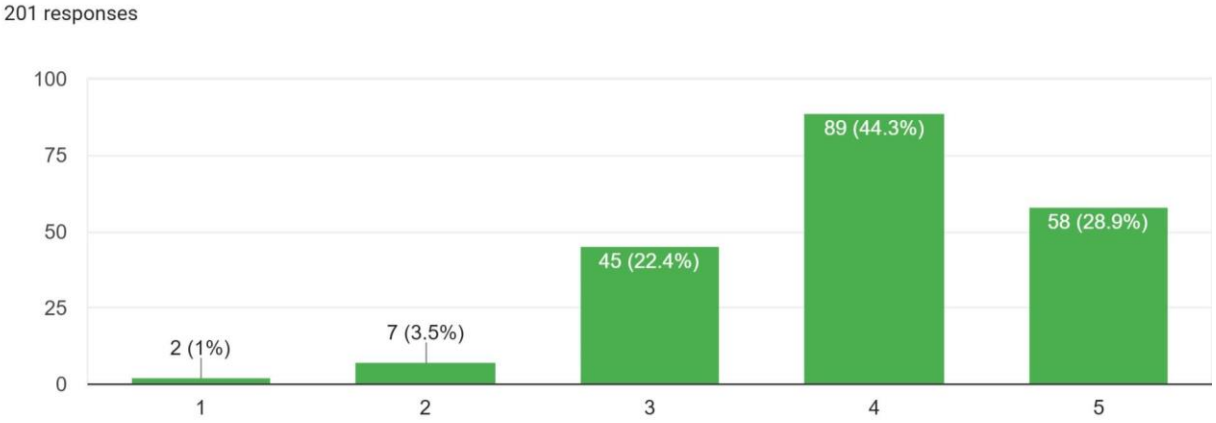
Response type	Count	Percentage
Clear and relevant	163	83%

Partially clear	15	8%
Not clear	20	10%

IV. Did you notice any inconsistencies in the assessment process or results? If yes, please provide details.

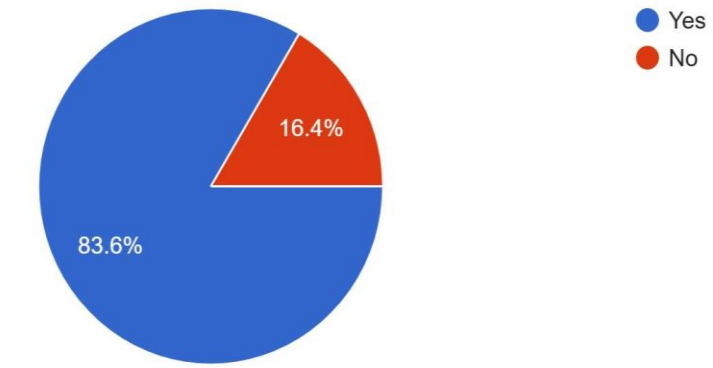


V. How consistent were the results when slightly changing responses? (Scale: 1 - Not consistent, 5 - Very consistent)



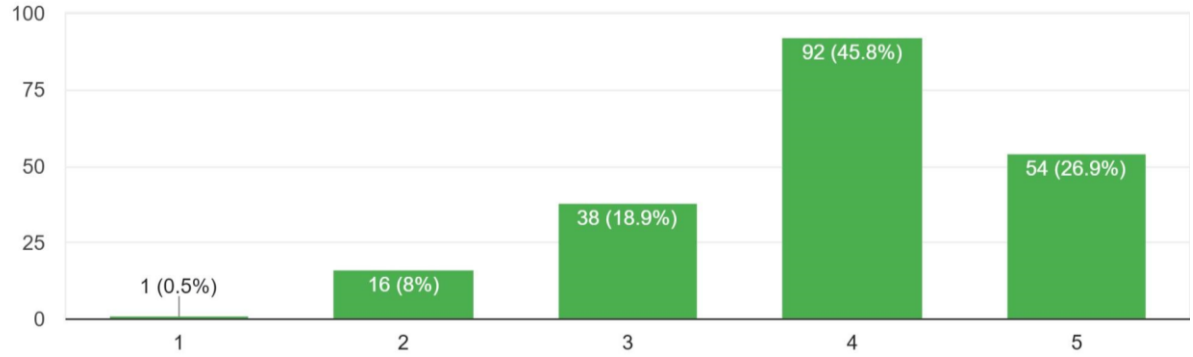
VI. Did the self-assessment tool provide guidance on integrating socially engaged science into your career path?

201 responses



VII. How useful was the information provided for understanding the role of socially engaged science in your field? (Scale: 1 - Not useful, 5 - Very useful)

201 responses



VIII. Were there specific recommendations on how to apply socially engaged science principles in your professional development?

Response Category	Description
Majority Positive	Most respondents (~65-70%) confirmed receiving useful and specific recommendations on applying socially engaged research principles.
Partially Affirmative	Some respondents (~15-20%) felt recommendations were present but too general or not tailored to their specific role or context.

Negative / Unclear	A smaller group (~10-15%) did not notice specific recommendations or found them unclear or not actionable.

IX. What improvements could be made to better integrate socially engaged science into the assessment tool?

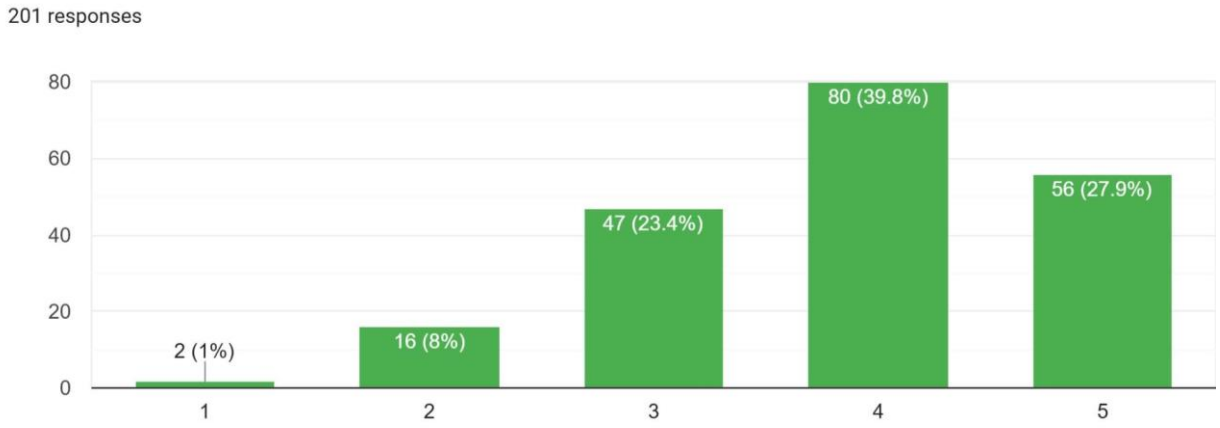
Improvement Area	Number of Mentions
No improvement needed / everything is OK	65
Add real-world examples / case studies	25
Clarify definitions / provide glossary	15
Improve visual design / navigation / layout	15
Add reflective elements or prompts	10
Include stakeholder/community input	20
Provide specific recommendations / suggestions	30
Make tool more practical / applicable	25
Provide feedback on results / how to improve	20
Improve accessibility / inclusivity	10
Include interactive elements	10
Other / not sure / no opinion	20

X. What improvements could be made to better integrate socially engaged science into the assessment tool?

Suggestion	*Count*	*Category*
include real-world case examples	*1*	*Content & Methodology*
clearer definitions of SER	*1*	*Content & Methodology*
criteria for community involvement	*1*	*Content & Methodology*
improve layout and navigation	*1*	*User Experience & Accessibility*
audio-visual content	*1*	*User Experience & Accessibility*
interactive elements	*1*	*User Experience &*

		Accessibility
better site navigation	*1*	*User Experience & Accessibility*
chatbot	*1*	*User Experience & Accessibility*
stakeholder involvement	*1*	*Engagement & Integration*
personalised feedback	*1*	*User Experience & Accessibility*
community feedback	*1*	*Engagement & Integration*
examples from different disciplines	*1*	*Content & Methodology*
contextual indicators	*1*	*Content & Methodology*
open questions on own research	*1*	*Engagement & Integration*
support for sectoral diversity	*1*	*Engagement & Integration*
co-creation and mutual benefit	*1*	*Content & Methodology*
glossary of key terms	*1*	*User Experience & Accessibility*
graphics or visual outputs	*1*	*User Experience & Accessibility*
develop guidelines for application	*1*	*Content & Methodology*
link to resources or tools	*1*	*Engagement & Integration*
update the site	*1*	*User Experience & Accessibility*

XI. How actionable were the recommendations provided by the tool? (Scale: 1 - Not actionable, 5 - Very actionable)



XII. Would you use and/or recommend this self-assessment tool to others?