Digital Archives and Third Mission: Assessing the Production of Public Goods in the VQR

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Outline

- The VQR Framework
- Knowledge Valorisation (Third Mission)
- Cultural Heritage Focus
- Evaluation Process

# Evaluation of Research Quality: What is it for?

1. To assess the quality of research in Italian universities and research institutions, through:

Research outputs (articles, monographs, patents, etc.)

Knowledge valorisation activities (Third Mission/Social Impact)

Participation in competitive international projects

Research infrastructures (on a trial basis, and only for institutions)
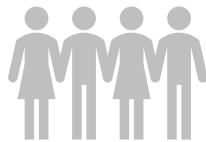
2. To improve the Italian research system, by encouraging:

Active participation of researchers

Quality in recruitment and career progression

Collaborations with businesses, public administrations, and civil society

Technology transfer and social impact

3. To contribute to the allocation of public funding:

VQR results are a key criterion for allocating the "performance-based" share of the Ordinary Financing Fund (FFO) to universities and the Ordinary Fund for Research Institutions (FOE)

VQR: Frequency

✓ VQR is a national five-year exercise conducted by ANVUR.

✓ Four VQR exercises have been conducted:

　1. 2011-2013, referring to the period **2004-2010 (VQR1)**
　2. 2015-2017, referring to the period **2011-2014 (VQR2)**
　3. 2020-2022, referring to the period **2015-2019 (VQR3)**
　4. 2024-2026, referring to the period **2020-2024 (VQR4)**

VQR 2020-2024: numbers

- ➤ Number of **Institutions** involved: 132
  - ✓ Universities: 100
  - ✓ Public Research Organizations: 13
  - ✓ Other Voluntary Institutions: 19

- ➤ Number of **researchers**: 77,703

- ➤ Number of **research products**: 198,602
- ➤ Number of **case studies of KV**: 858
- ➤ Number of **research infrastructures**: 12

- ✓ **17 disciplinary** GEVs
- ✓ **2 interdisciplinary** GEVs (KV e Infrastructures)

- ✓ **728 experts** (disciplinary + interdisciplinary)

- ✓ **Thousands of external** reviewers

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VQR 2020-2024
Knowledge Valorisation

Knowledge Valorisation

*Knowledge Valorisation (**so-called Third Mission**) is the process of **creating economic and/or social value** from knowledge, by linking different areas and sectors and transforming data, know-how, and research results into sustainable products, services, solutions and knowledge-based policies that benefit society.*

(Ministerial Decree of August 1, 2023 – Guidelines for the Evaluation of Research Quality (VQR) 2020–2024, Art. 1)

The definition reflects the **EU Council Recommendation 2022/2415** of December 2, 2022, on guiding principles for knowledge valorisation.

Case Studies

The institutions presented a number of case studies proportional to the number of researchers in each institution (for universities, 1 for every 100 researchers).

The case studies concern interventions and activities carried out both before and during the 2020–2024 period, provided they generated an **impact during part or all of the 2020–2024 period.**

Each case study may be associated with up to three **thematic area** and one or more fields of action per area.

There is **no preference** regarding the thematic area, the field of action, the number of structures involved, or the continuity of the initiative

Boundaries of Knowledge Valorisation in VQR

| Technology transfer	Production and management of public goods	Public engagement	Life and Health Sciences:	Environmental Sustainability, Inclusion, and Inequality Reduction (Agenda 2030)
- *Intellectual and industrial property valorisation* - *Academic entrepreneurship* - *Technology transfer and intermediary structures* - *Cross-innovation and cross-innovation and cross-fertilization initiatives;* - *Training activities to promote innovation culture*	- *Management and valorisation of artistic and cultural heritage* - *Lifelong learning and open education* - *Production of social and educational public goods and inclusion policies* - *Territorial, infrastructural, and urban regeneration projects* - *Actions for the development of Open Science*	- *Organization of events (e.g., concerts, theatre performances)* - *Scientific dissemination* - *Multimedia outreach* - *Initiatives involving citizens in research and/or innovation* - *Engagement with schools*	- *Clinical trials* - *Public health promotion and protection initiatives* - *Healthcare activities for vulnerable groups* - *International health cooperation* - *Environmental health and food safety*	- *Combating poverty, promoting inclusion and social cohesion, equality before the law, justice* - *Ecological and energy transition, environmental and climate sustainability* - *International cooperation for sustainable development and social cohesion* - *Promotion and dissemination of legality and sustainability culture* - *Innovative activities supporting sustainability in organization, infrastructure, or governance*

Case Studies by Thematic Area

- A total of 858 case studies were submitted for evaluation.

- It was possible to indicate up to 3 thematic areas (total selections: 1,563; average: 1.8).

- The most frequently chosen thematic area was III. Public Engagement (32.7%), followed by V. Sustainability – UN Agenda 2030 (19.7%) and II. Production and Management of Public Goods (19.6%). Next were I. Technology Transfer (16.6%) and IV. Life and Health Sciences (11.4%).
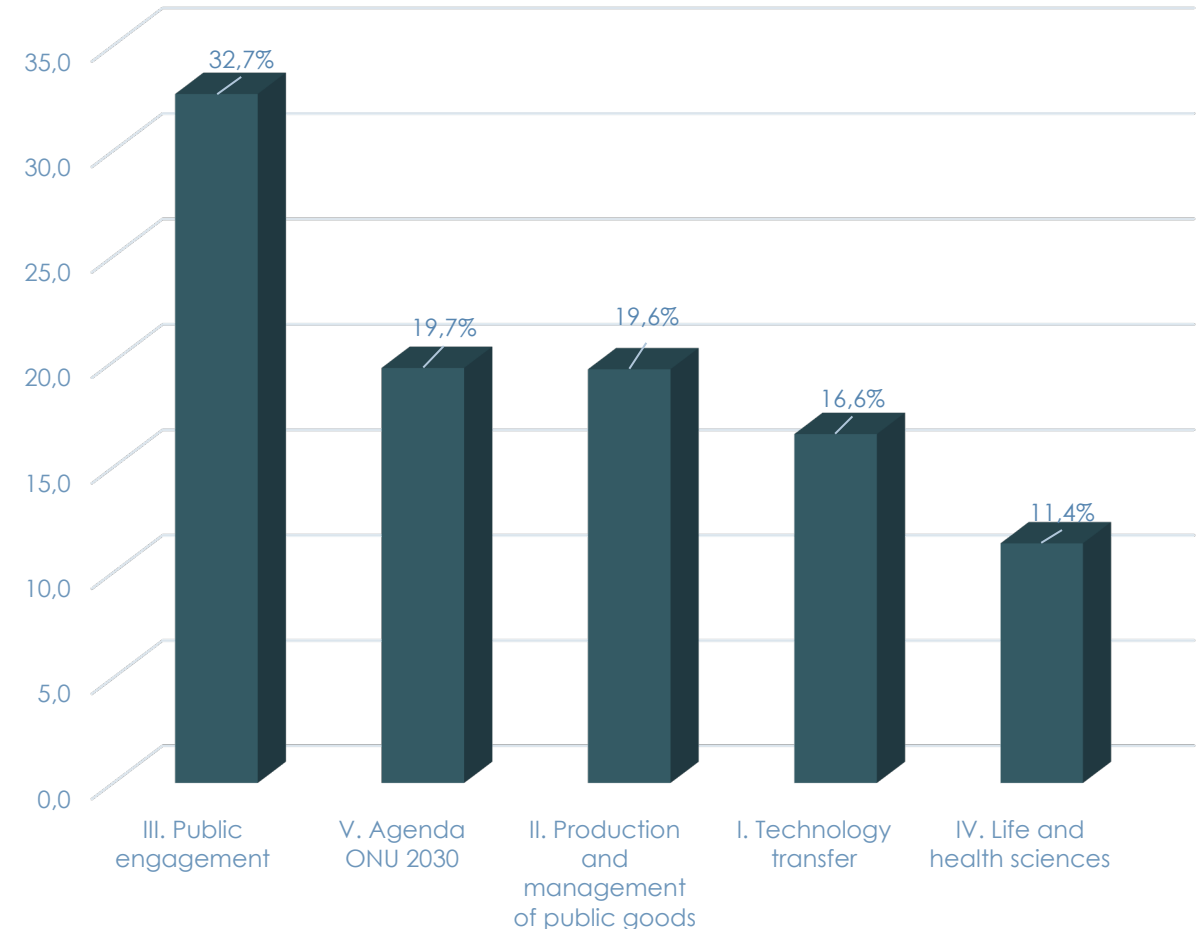
What is Evaluated?

For evaluation purposes, institutions submit case studies of knowledge valorisation activities, whose impact can be verified in part or throughout the entire period 2020–2024.

- *Impact refers to the **transformation or improvement** generated for the economy, society, culture, health, environment, and the contribution to reducing economic, social, and territorial inequalities, aimed at improving quality of life in all areas where the institution operates.*

- *Impact also includes contributions to **reducing or preventing damage and risks**, or other negative externalities.*

Who Evaluates?

The interdisciplinary GEV "Knowledge Valorisation"

Number of experts: 30

Cognome	Nome	Ente
FERRIGNO	**Luigi**	**Università degli Studi di CASSINO e del LAZIO MERIDIONALE**
ANFOSSI	Alberto Francesco	Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo
APPOLLONI	Andrea	Università degli Studi di ROMA "Tor Vergata"
BERTI	Andrea	Università degli Studi di PADOVA
CLEMENTE	Fabrizio	Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche
DE GENNARO	Gianluigi	Università degli Studi di BARI ALDO MORO
FASANO	Mauro	Università degli Studi INSUBRIA Varese - Como
FIDECARO	Francesco	Università di PISA
FRATI	Francesco	Università degli Studi di SIENA
GALASSI	Cristina	Università degli Studi di PERUGIA
GRIECO	Paolo	Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II
IAPADRE	Pasquale Lelio	Università degli Studi dell'AQUILA
ISIDORI	Andrea	Università degli Studi di ROMA "La Sapienza"
LOMBARDI	Patrizia	Politecnico di TORINO
LONGHI	Sauro	Università Politecnica delle MARCHE
MILELLA	Evelina	IMAST- Distretto tecnologico Ingegneria Materiali Compositi Polimerici e Strut
MUCCINI	Michele	Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche
NOTA	Laura	Università degli Studi di PADOVA
PERUZZINI	Margherita	Università degli Studi di BOLOGNA
PIAZZA	Mario	Scuola Normale Superiore di PISA
PICCALUGA	Andrea Mario	Scuola Superiore di Studi Universitari e Perfezionamento Sant'Anna
PIERINI	Marco	Università degli Studi di FIRENZE
POMATI	Paolo	Università degli Studi del PIEMONTE ORIENTALE "Amedeo Avogadro"
PREZIOSO	Maria	Università degli Studi di ROMA "Tor Vergata"
RONCADA	Paola	Università degli Studi "Magna Graecia" di CATANZARO
SCARDIGNO	Anna Fausta	Università degli Studi di BARI ALDO MORO
SCIANITTI	Francesca	Istituto Nazionale di Fisica Nucleare
SIANESI	Andrea	Politecnico di MILANO
SPIGARELLI	Francesca	Università degli Studi di MACERATA
TORTORA	Genoveffa	Università degli Studi di Salerno

Evaluation Document

The GEV provided a declaration for each thematic area, and the definition of evaluation criteria and possible indicators.

Valutazione della Qualità della Ricerca 2020-2024
(VQR 2020-2024)

Documento sulle modalità di valutazione dei casi studio

Gruppo di Esperti della Valutazione

Attività di valorizzazione delle conoscenze

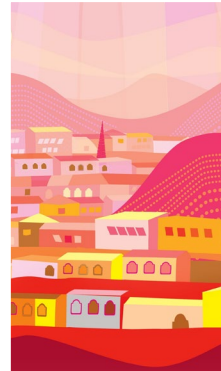GEV Interdisciplinare

31 Luglio 2024

How is it Evaluated: Evaluation Criteria

MERIT CLASSES
A. *Outstanding*
B. *Excellent*
C. *Standard*
D. *Sufficient*
E. *Poor relevance or unacceptable*

a) Social, economic, and cultural dimension of impact, considering the ability to valorise knowledge by connecting different areas and sectors

b) Relevance to the context of reference

c) Added value for beneficiaries.

d) Scientific, organizational, and/or managerial contribution of the proposing structure

Boundaries of Knowledge Valorisation in VQR

Technology transfer	Production and management of public goods	Public engagement	Life and Health Sciences:	Environmental Sustainability, Inclusion, and Inequality Reduction (Agenda 2030)
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Definition: Production, Management, and Valorisation of Artistic and Cultural Heritage (AREA II)

- This refers to the conservation, management, enjoyment, and valorisation of archaeological excavations, museum, historic buildings, libraries, **archives**, theatres, and sports facilities, as well as musical and performing arts activities.

- It includes the conservation and valorisation of cultural heritage as a form of **institutional commitment**.

- It includes, among others, interventions for the digitalisation and removal of architectural barriers in cultural heritage, as well as projects for the renovation of university heritage that promote new services and social inclusion.

Examples of Valorisation Activities

- Digitisation of historical archives and collections.
- Restoration and adaptive reuse of university buildings.
- Cultural events and exhibitions involving local communities.
- Removal of architectural barriers to improve accessibility.
- Collaborative projects enhancing education and inclusion.

Cultural Heritage: social impact

a.1) Social impact refers to **benefits for the community**, such as greater accessibility and usability, raising awareness among community members, civic participation activities, and building networks with other institutions.

Examples of **indicators**:
- Guided tours and thematic itineraries, including in foreign languages;
- Educational workshops;
- Training sessions for teachers, students, and other users;
- Tools and initiatives that facilitate access to heritage for people with physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities;
- Use of new and modern digital technologies to enable innovative ways of enjoying cultural heritage.

Cultural Heritage: economic impact

a.2) Economic impact refers **to improvements** in the ability to manage heritage and activities, in terms of changes in legal status, financial management efficiency, increased financial resources to support conservation/valorisation, and creation of qualified and specialized employment.

Examples of **indicators**:
- Legal and/or administrative autonomy;
- Methods for measuring and estimating heritage and activities;
- Ability to increase revenues (ticketing, sponsorships, donations, commercial activities);
- Creation of qualified and specialized jobs.

Cultural Heritage: cultural impact

a.3) Cultural impact refers **to changes** compared to the initial situation in terms of interventions for protection, maintenance, and conservation of artistic and cultural heritage.

Examples of **indicators**:

- Improvements in protection (e.g., upgrading and optimizing spaces, services..);
- Enhancements in knowledge (e.g., inventorying and/or cataloguing heritage, including in digital and open-access formats);
- Strengthening communication and promotion of heritage and activities, including in digital environment;
- Improvements in accessibility and enjoyment

Cultural Heritage: context

b) Relevance to the context of reference

Defined in two ways:

- **External** context: relates to users, territory, and society at regional, national, European, and/or international levels.
- **Internal** context: relates to institutional specificities and mission (e.g., strategies, organization) and the benefits for the institution, such as staff retraining, organizational change, resource optimization and valorisation.

The coherence with **institutional objectives** and Knowledge Valorisation goals must also be highlighted.

Cultural Heritage: context

b) Relevance to the context of reference

Examples of **Indicators**:

- Clear and documented analysis of the reference context;
- Ability to develop a culture of relationship (e.g. participation in external network projects);
- Effectiveness of measurement tools to assess incremental effects of impact on the context, both quantitative and qualitative;
- Accreditation with specific audience types; partnerships with other local and non-local institutions.

Cultural Heritage: beneficiaries

c) Added value for beneficiaries

The value generated by the case study will vary depending on the **type of beneficiary**.

Case studies should document the impact on the **target audience** in terms of satisfaction, media coverage (press, TV, social networks), or permanent acquisitions (e.g., expanded access; consolidation of activities through subsequent actions).

Both the **quality** of impact and the **breadth** of the audience will be considered.

It is useful to document any monitoring and measurement initiatives regarding **beneficiary satisfaction**.

Cultural Heritage: beneficiaries

c) Added value for beneficiaries

Examples of **Indicators**:
- Ability to demonstrate and justify the **type and size** of the beneficiary audience (surveys, focus groups, questionnaires);
- For school participation: integration of the experience into educational plans and/or agreements with regional/provincial school office;
- Inclusion of activities in programs of associations dealing with disabilities and other vulnerabilitie;
- Tools for investigating potential audiences to identify needs and expectations.

Cultural Heritage: contribution of the institution

d) Scientific, organizational, and/or managerial contribution of the proposing structure

Qualitative and quantitative contribution provided by the Institution to the case study, considering scientific, organizational, and/or managerial aspects.

Documentation should include:
- Links to the institution's scientific activity;
- Actions implemented in terms of human and financial resource;
- Collaborations with other institutions and organizations (not necessarily academic);
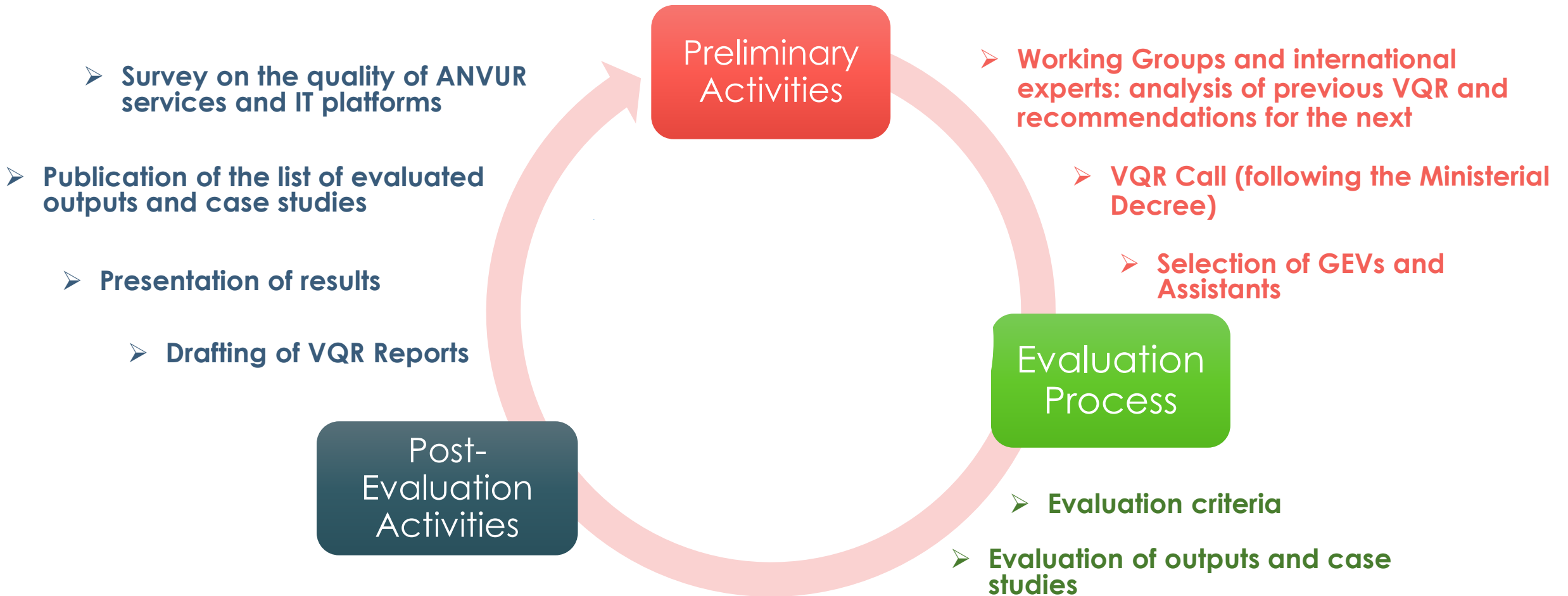- Recognition at national and international level or awards received

Cultural Heritage: contribution of the institution

d) Scientific, organizational, and/or managerial contribution of the proposing structure

Examples of **Indicators:**

- Human and financial resources: budget allocated; external funding obtained; number and roles of faculty and staff involved; possible involvement of student;
- Research dissemination: presentation of results in publications, films, documentaries, videos, musical reproductions, social and digital media, non-specialist websites;
- Visibility and recognition: presence at national and international symposia; awards and recognitions received.

VQR: Cyclical Process

Preliminary Activities

➢ **Survey on the quality of ANVUR services and IT platforms**

➢ **Publication of the list of evaluated outputs and case studies**

➢ **Presentation of results**

➢ **Drafting of VQR Reports**

Post-Evaluation Activities

➢ **Working Groups and international experts: analysis of previous VQR and recommendations for the next**

➢ **VQR Call (following the Ministerial Decree)**

➢ **Selection of GEVs and Assistants**

Evaluation Process

➢ **Evaluation criteria**

➢ **Evaluation of outputs and case studies**

Main Takeaways

- Knowledge Valorisation broadens the scope of research evaluation beyond scientific outputs.

- The VQR integrates social, economic, and cultural impact into the assessment of research quality.

- Cultural heritage is a key area of Knowledge Valorisation, showing how universities contribute to the production and management of public goods.

Thank you for your attention!

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