

Funding organization uses the regional CRIS as source for reporting research: the case of FWO and FRIS

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Introduction

This contribution gives an idea of how a funding organization uses a regional CRIS as a primary data source for research reporting. Research information needs to be put correctly in the institutional CRIS, then needs to be sent to FRIS, the regional CRIS of Flanders, and finally can be retrieved by the funding organization to prefill the researchers' report. This leads to less administrative reporting burden for the researcher and to more complete information in FRIS.

FRIS as regional CRIS in Flanders

In Flanders, knowledge institutions have a long tradition of using a CRIS and sending information to the regional CRIS, called FRIS (Flanders Research Information Space). Since its beginning in 2006, FRIS has been steadily expanding as well in depth (more information objects) as in width (more knowledge institutes). From 2013 on, the architecture of FRIS was completely redesigned to have information flowing automatically from knowledge institutions to FRIS using webservices, the idea behind it being to reduce administrative burden on the side of the institutions and at the same time having more quality results on the side of FRIS.

In 2019 the span of info to be provided to FRIS was widened (also infrastructure, patents and datasets were added) and FRIS was also used to monitor Open Science.

Research Foundation – Flanders connects with FRIS

In 2023, the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) decided to make a new step in the way they ask their researchers to report on the results of the research projects FWO is funding. Researchers have to report on the status of their research halfway the project and at the end of it. One of the elements that have to be listed in the report are the peer-reviewed publications that resulted from the research project. In 2024, FWO starts a pilot where the reports of the research projects will be prefilled with information that FWO extracts from FRIS: a list of all peer reviewed publications, which have a link to the research project will be shown in the researchers' report.

If a publication is missing, or if information is not correct, the researcher cannot change the info in the report, but he/she will have to make sure that the info is corrected at the source (e.g. mostly the library or CRIS-system of the knowledge institutions), after which the updated info will be sent to FRIS and then be retrieved by FWO. This procedure guarantees that the correct information is maintained by the owner i.e. the research institute where the research is taking place.

To make a deduplicated list of publications for FWO, FRIS created publication golden records. So if several institutions participate in the same publication, FRIS will return it only once in the golden record service and no duplicates will be in the list extracted by FWO.

Researchers' advantage

Researchers are expected to have registered all necessary information about their research into their institutional CRIS. From the institutional CRIS, the information should flow to FRIS. As most of the institutional CRIS's have already a kind of quality process included, and by ingesting the information in FRIS and passing the validation rules, the information should be of a certain qualitative standard. So, when FWO retrieves the information on peer reviewed publications to prefill the researchers' report, all information should be correct. And the researcher has less extra administrative reporting burden, as his/her information is reused in the reporting template of the funder.

Conclusion

A new and unique functionality of FRIS is being the primary source for research reporting by the research funding agency FWO. Golden records of publications are built and are retrieved by FWO to have a deduplicated list of peer reviewed publications in the researchers' report.

The first pilot of this reporting module of FWO starts in Q1 of 2024. If the results are satisfactory, this approach will be extended for additional types of research outputs in the future, like non-peer reviewed publications, patents, dissertations and datasets.

The future challenge for FRIS is to become the unique and complete hub for research information in Flanders.