

Measuring Social Impact at SLU

Altmetric provides a “broader understanding of how scientific output is disseminated, read and used”.

We spoke to Daniel Albertsson and Agneta Lindsten, librarians at The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

Background

The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) was founded in 1977 but its roots date back to the 18th century, having been formed from a combination of three long-standing colleges, the earliest of which was founded in 1775. Today, the university consists of the following faculties: Landscape Planning, Horticulture and Agricultural Sciences; Natural Resources and Agriculture Sciences; Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science; Forest Sciences.

Customer need

The future sustainability of the planet and the quality of human existence within a sustainable world is of critical importance to SLU.

SLU has a strong commitment to the United Nations' 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs). SLU does this through its core activities of research and education, developing new knowledge and the capacity for applying that knowledge in the service of global sustainability.



The 2030 Agenda at SLU

In its policy for making a global contribution to the 2030 Agenda, SLU has focused its efforts on six areas that reflect the university's mission and strengths:

- Climate change
- Food security
- Circular and biobased economy
- Biodiversity and ecosystems
- Global health
- Urban sustainability.

To demonstrate its work in these areas, SLU sought to establish a web presence or portal that directly connected the university's research outcomes with the 2030 Agenda. This project was led by staff in the SLU University Library and involved manually curating a list of research publications categorised by the SDGs.

"SLU has extensive research and collaborations that contribute to sustainable development. The aim of our publication project was to map SLU's publishing efforts against the Sustainable Development Goals (2030 Agenda), and to provide easy access to those publications; and through them, to provide useful information about research results and data that can help to achieve the goals," said Daniel Albertsson, Librarian at SLU.

"A dashboard showing some analyses while giving direct access to the underlying data seemed to be an attractive, honest and transparent way to display our results."

Having curated their publications, the team at SLU also wanted to explore whether that research was having a wider impact.

Solution

SLU has used data from Altmetric Explorer to present a case for societal attention and impact of its research.

Altmetric Explorer enables users to search for up to 25,000 "scholarly identifiers" in published outputs. These can be chosen for many reasons, such as according to their alignment with specific SDGs.

Having made the connection between its published research and the SDGs, thanks to Altmetric the team has also been able to show the links between this work and news stories, social media, blogs, Wikipedia articles, policy documents and many other aspects of broader attention.

"To achieve the goals, it is of the utmost importance that research results do not stay hidden in the academic world, but are visible, perceived and used in a wider context,"

Agneta Lindsten

"Altmetrics offer a broader - and sometimes deeper - understanding of how scientific output is disseminated, read and used. They provide commenting news articles, comments in social media, and fulltext policy documents referring to the publications, which together give a number of angles of approach to understanding the public reach and impact of the research."

SLU has also become the first university in the world to add Altmetric's specialised application programming interface (API), which automatically updates the public reports available on SLU's website. What started as an intensive, manual project for the SLU team is now being progressively automated.

Since SLU's research, the team at Altmetric have added a new SDG search filter, making it faster and easier than ever before to search for papers that are relevant to different SDGs in research assessments. Here's a [short video](#) showing how it works.

If you would like to speak to us about how Altmetric can support your institutional outreach plans, please [get in touch](#) with our friendly team today.