# Rankings and quality assurance tools

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CHE
Centre for
Higher Education

# Agenda

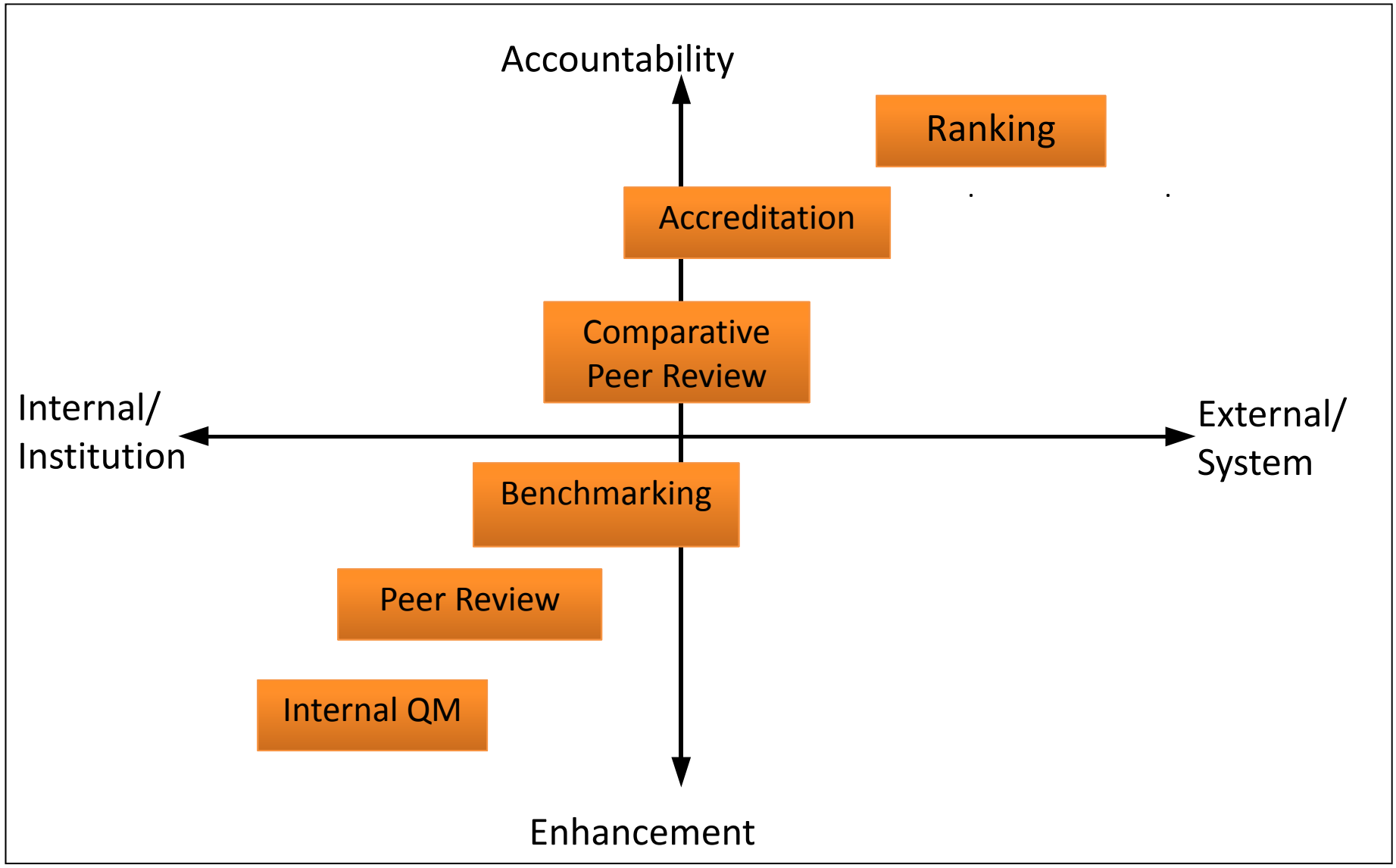
**Assessment instruments in higher education**

**The particular role of rankings**

**U-Multirank**

- **Basic facts**
- **The benefits of U-Multirank**
- **Activities and next steps**

# Assessment instruments in higher education



# Rankings: Purpose and Methodology

- The notion of ranking refers to a method: to compare units (universities) by quantitative indicators
- Most rankings: done by external organisations for external audiences
- Instrument of transpareny /accountability

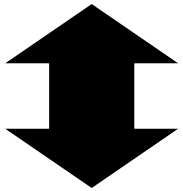
➔ **Ranking is different from evaluation!**

- Transparency vs. improvement
- Focus on indicators, not on processes
- No causal analysis of (weak) performance

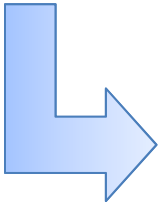
➔ **Rankings cannot replace instruments of quality assurance**

# The general challenge of rankings

Main target group of (most) rankings is least informed group on higher education
➔ need for reduction of complexity of information



Higher education institutions themeselves use data for comparison
➔ need for detailed & sophisticated information



Rankings have to find a balance in order to both reach target group & get acceptance within HE

# Form traditional rankings to a new approach

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Institutional rankings** | → | **Multi-level rankings: Field specific rankings** |
| **Composite overall indicator** | → | **Multi-dimensional ranking** |
| **League tables** | → | **Group approach (top, middle, bottom)** |

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# Why one more ranking?
## – *The purpose of U-Multirank*

**Policy purposes**

- Transparency (on diversity) about European Higher Education Area
- Benchmarking with Non-European higher education (Modernisation Agenda)

**Stakeholder related purposes, e.g.**

- Students: informed choices (university in a certain field)
- Institutions: strategy development through comparison & benchmarking
- Policy makers: diversity/performance of systems
- Employers: partners for cooperation

# How can those purposes be achieved?
## - *The basic approach*

- **Multidimensional ranking - Going beyond the traditional focus on research excellence**
  - 5 dimensions: Teaching & learning, research, knowledge transfer, international orientation, regional engagement
  - No composite indicators, no pre-defined weights on individual indicators

- **User-driven ranking**
  - Personalised ranking allows users to rank by their own preferences and priorities on dimensions and indicators
  - flexible web tool

# How can those purposes be achieved?
## - *The basic approach*

- **Comparing like with like**
  - Link to mapping indicators allowing identification of institutions with similar institutional profiles

- **Multi-level ranking**
  - Combining institutional ranking (whole institutions) and field-based rankings (start with: electrical and mechanical engineering, business studies, physics)

- **Stakeholder-oriented processes**
  - Intensive inclusion of stakeholders in development and continuous refinement of U-Multirank

# With this approach U-Multirank will create performance profiles respecting mission diversity

example field-based ranking

## Teaching & Learning

- Student-staff-ratio
- Graduation rate
- Percentage of academic staff with PhD
- Percentage of graduates graduating in norm period
- Rate of graduate unemployment
- Inclusion of work experience
- Indicators from student survey, e.g.
  - Quality of teaching
  - Organisation or programme
  - Quality of laboratories etc.

# With this approach U-Multirank will create performance profiles respecting mission diversity

## Research

- External research income (per fte academic staff)
- Doctorate productivity
- Total publication output (per fte academic staff)
- Field-normalised citation rate
- Highly cited research publications
- Research orientation of teaching (student survey)

## Knowledge transfer

- Income from private enterprises (research contracts, service contracts (e.g. material testing), licenses etc.)
- Joint publications with industry
- Patents (per fte academic staff)
- Co-patenting with industry (per fte academic staff)

# With this approach U-Multirank will create performance profiles respecting mission diversity

## International orientation

- International orientation of programmes (rating indicator)
- Opportunities to study abroad (student survey)
- Percentage of international academic staff
- Percenatge of PhDs by foreign students
- International joint publications
- International research income

## Regional engagement

- Percentage of graduates working in the region
- Student internships in local enterprises
- Degree theses in cooperation with local industry
- Regional joint publications
- Income from regional sources

# U-Multirank is done by a consortium of partners combining different functions and expertise

- **Coordination/lead and rankings**
  - **CHE** Centre for Higher Education
  - **CHEPS** Center for Higher Education Policy Studies
- **Partners**
  - **Data collection***: CWTS Center for Science and Tehnology Studies, U Leiden,* Incentim: International Centre for Research on Entrepreneurship, Technology and Innovation Management, KU Leuven, *Benedetto Lepori*, University Lugano
  - **Web tool experts**: folge3, Johnny Rich (push)
  - **Business Model**: Elsevier, Bertelsmann Foundation
- **Associate partners**
  - **National rankings**: OST (France); Perspektywy (Poland), Fundación CYD (Spain)
  - **Stakeholder Organisations**: Business Europe, ESU, CESAER, IRUN, UASNet

**crucial role!**

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# The U-Multirank tool will provide substantial benefits to users

## For prospective / mobile students

- Selection of field of study
- Guided journey to identify personal preferences / priorities
- Personalised selection of indicators

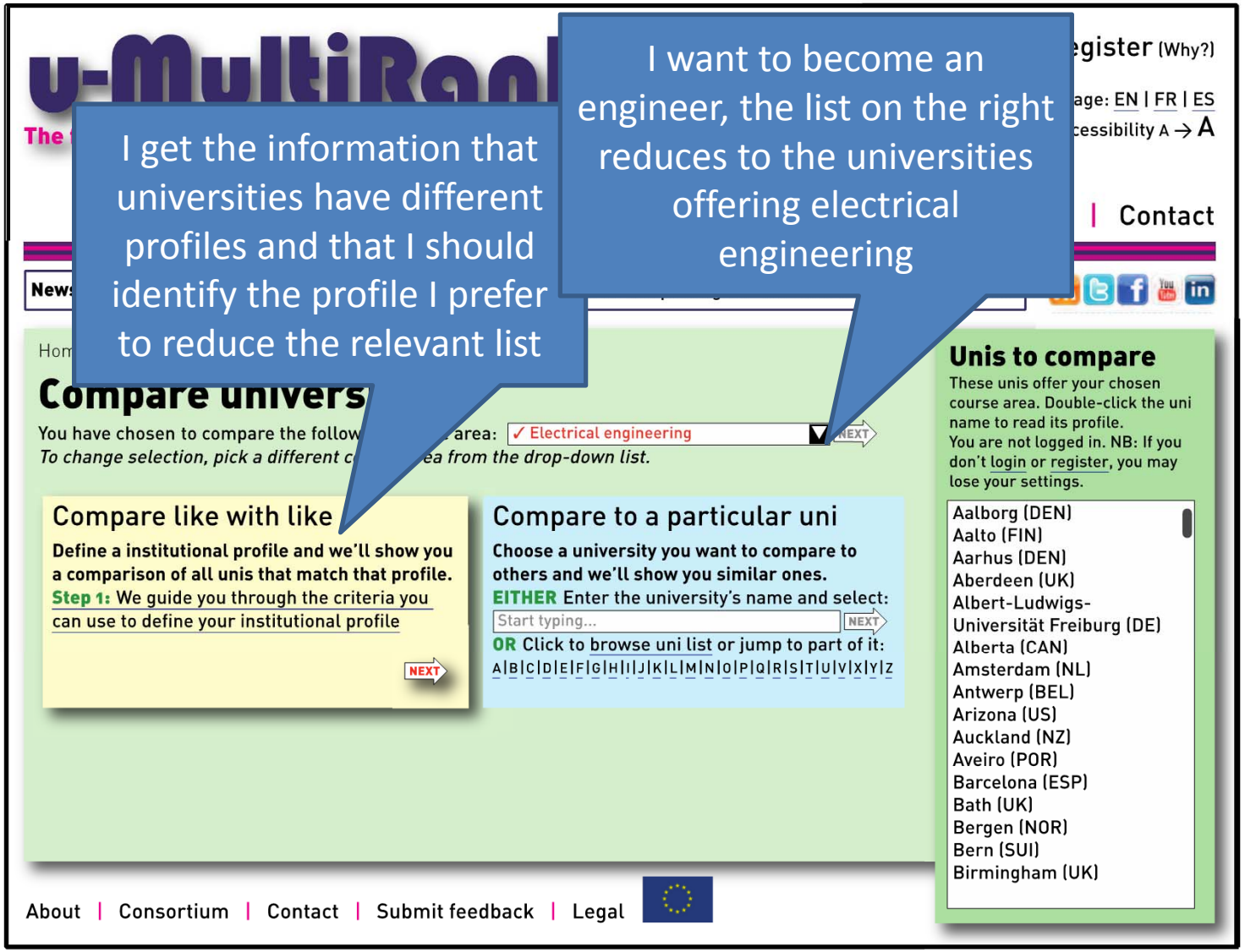
➔ *Result*: shortlist of institutions matching to personal preferences, ranking outcomes for personally relevant indicators

## For higher education institutions

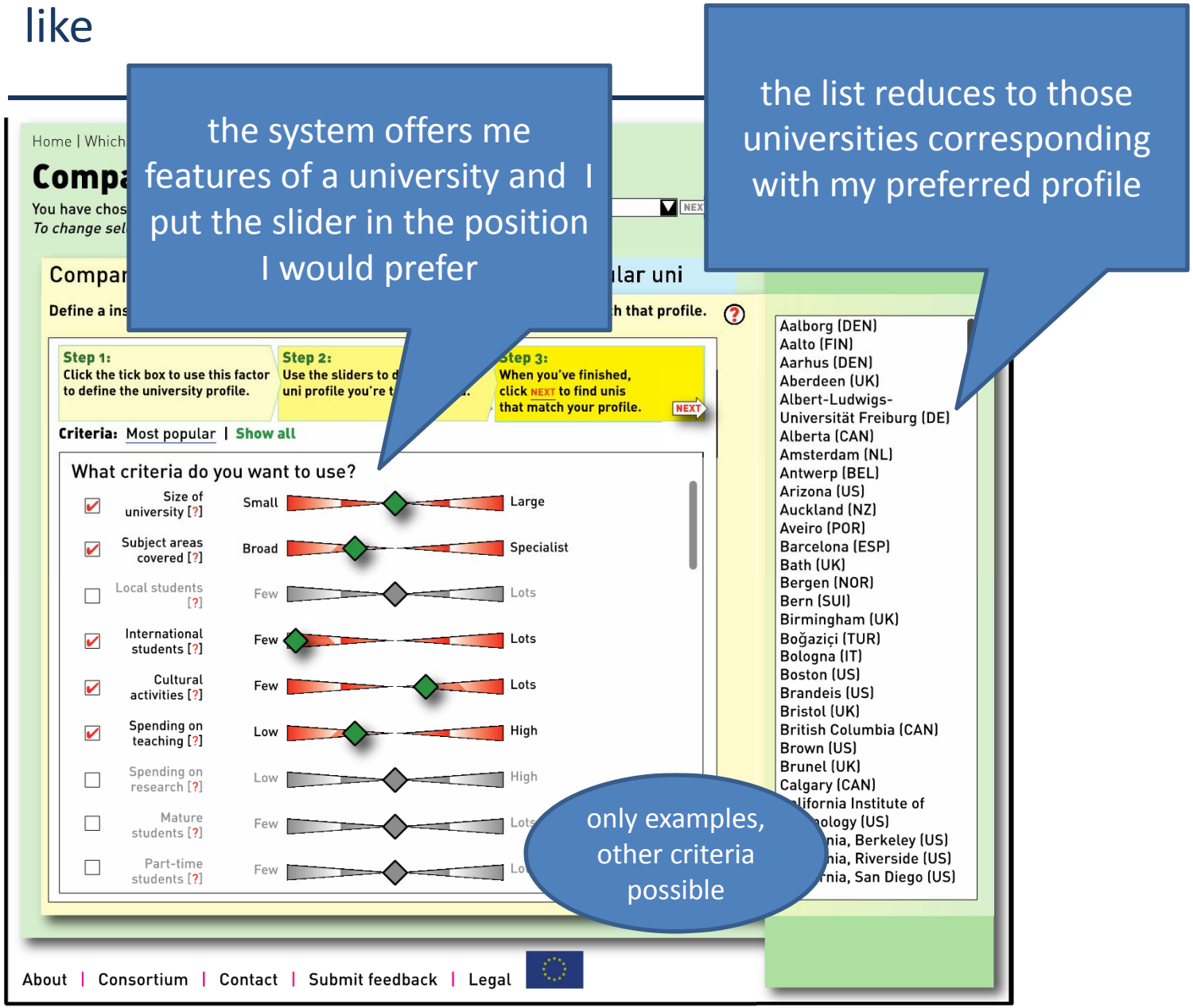
- Selection of institutional profiles (mapping indicators) to compare like with like
- Compare all/selected indicators or one dimension (institutional + field-based for all faculties )
- See and compare full institutional performance profiles
- Additional benefits to participating institutions:
  - Detailed analysis of their data compared to averages total sample
  - Option of creating benchmarking networks
  - services such as widgets for the website

# The benefits of the web tool: evidence-based decision making (Illustration of a student user-journey ) ……

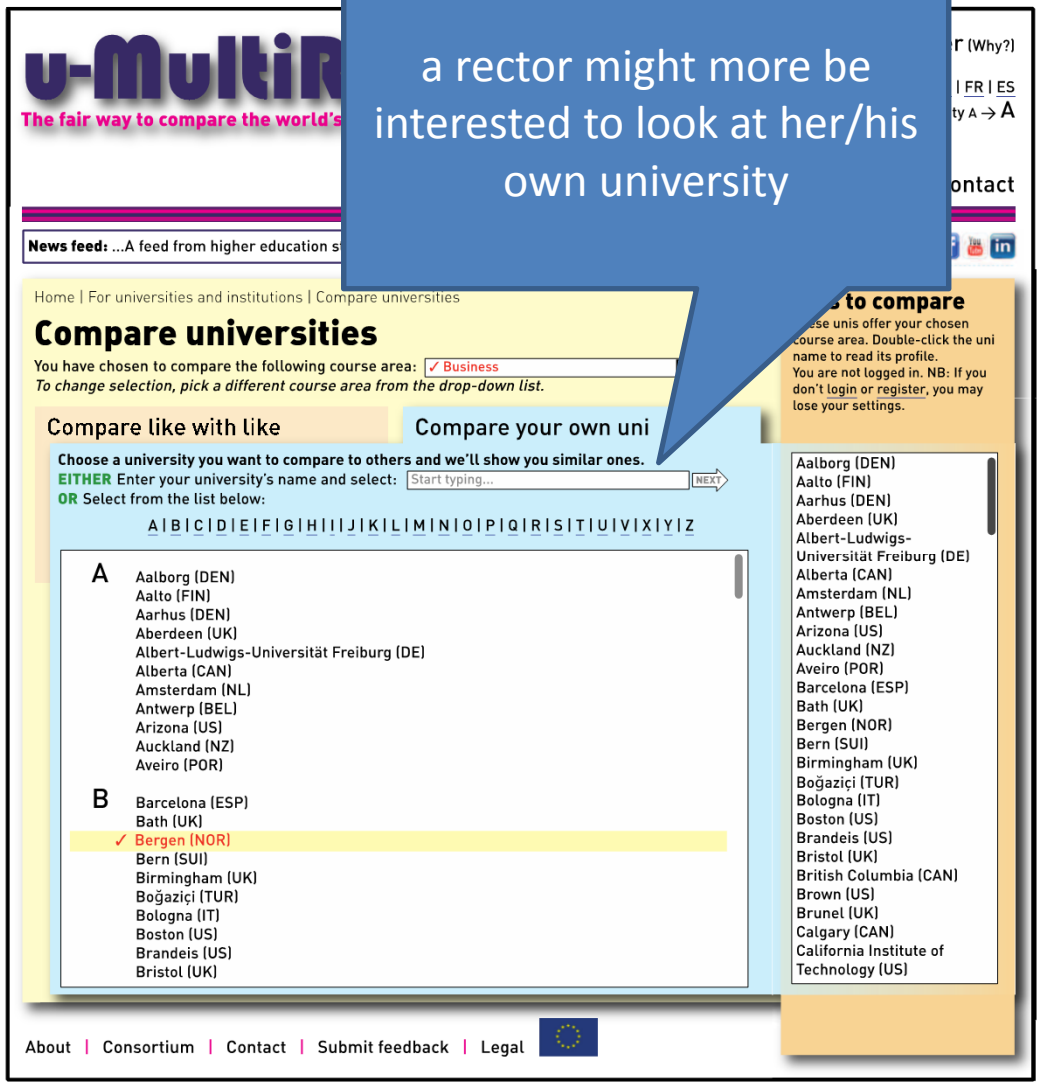
# … to identify first a sample of comparable institutions the user can …



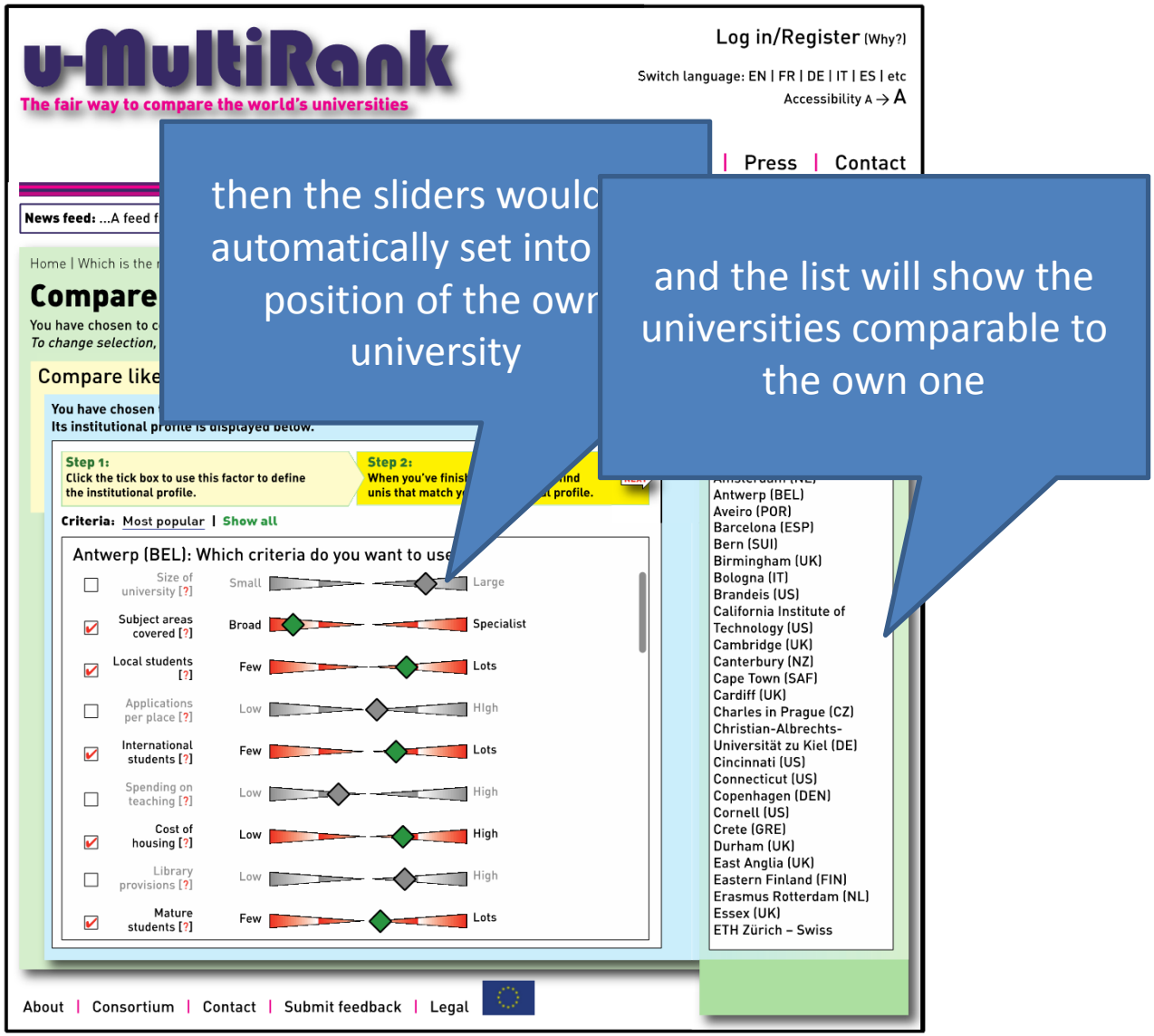
# …define an institutional profile to compare like with like



# …here is an alternative: you could define specific institutions to be compared….



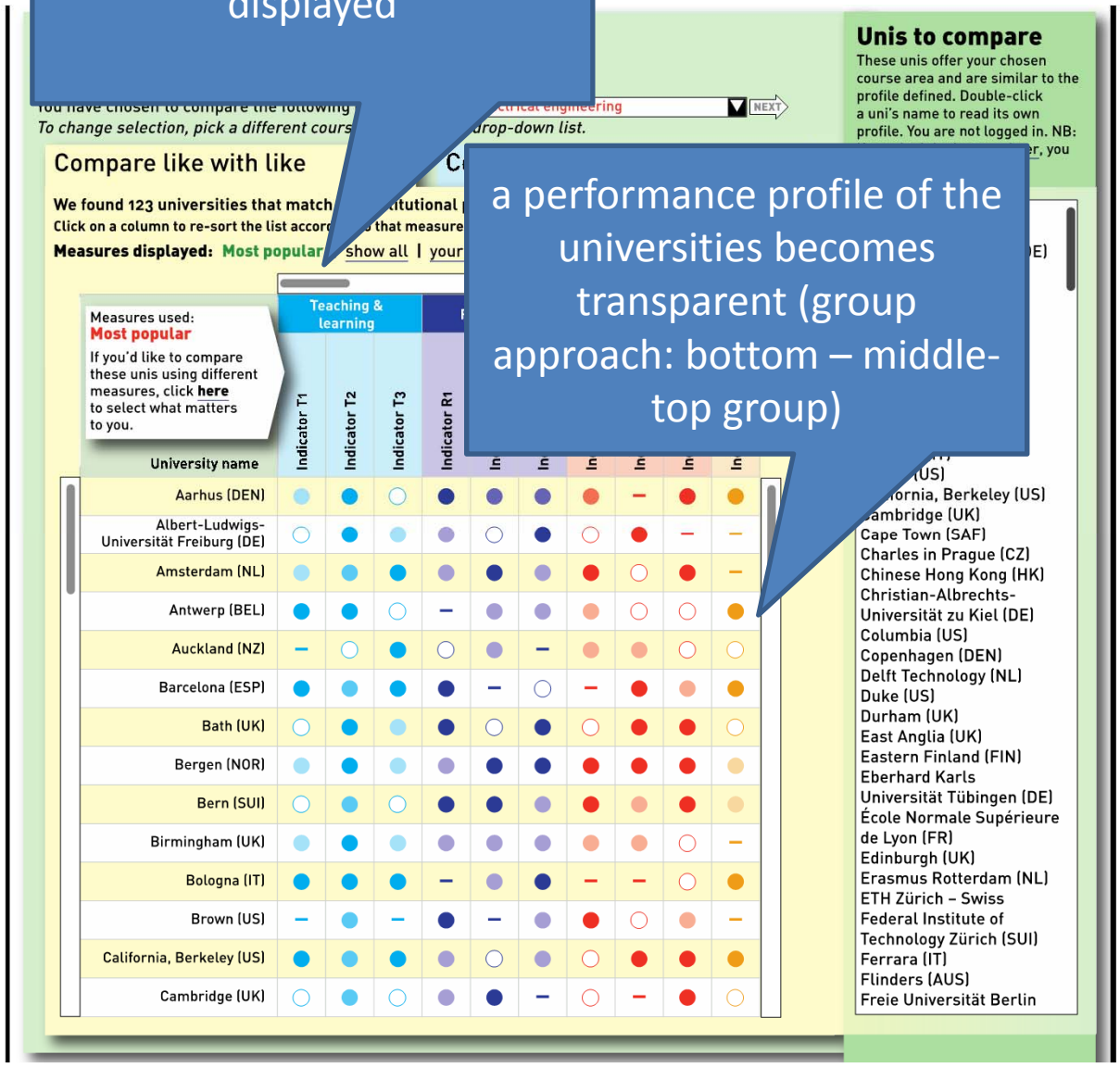
# … starting from the institutional profile of that particular institution…



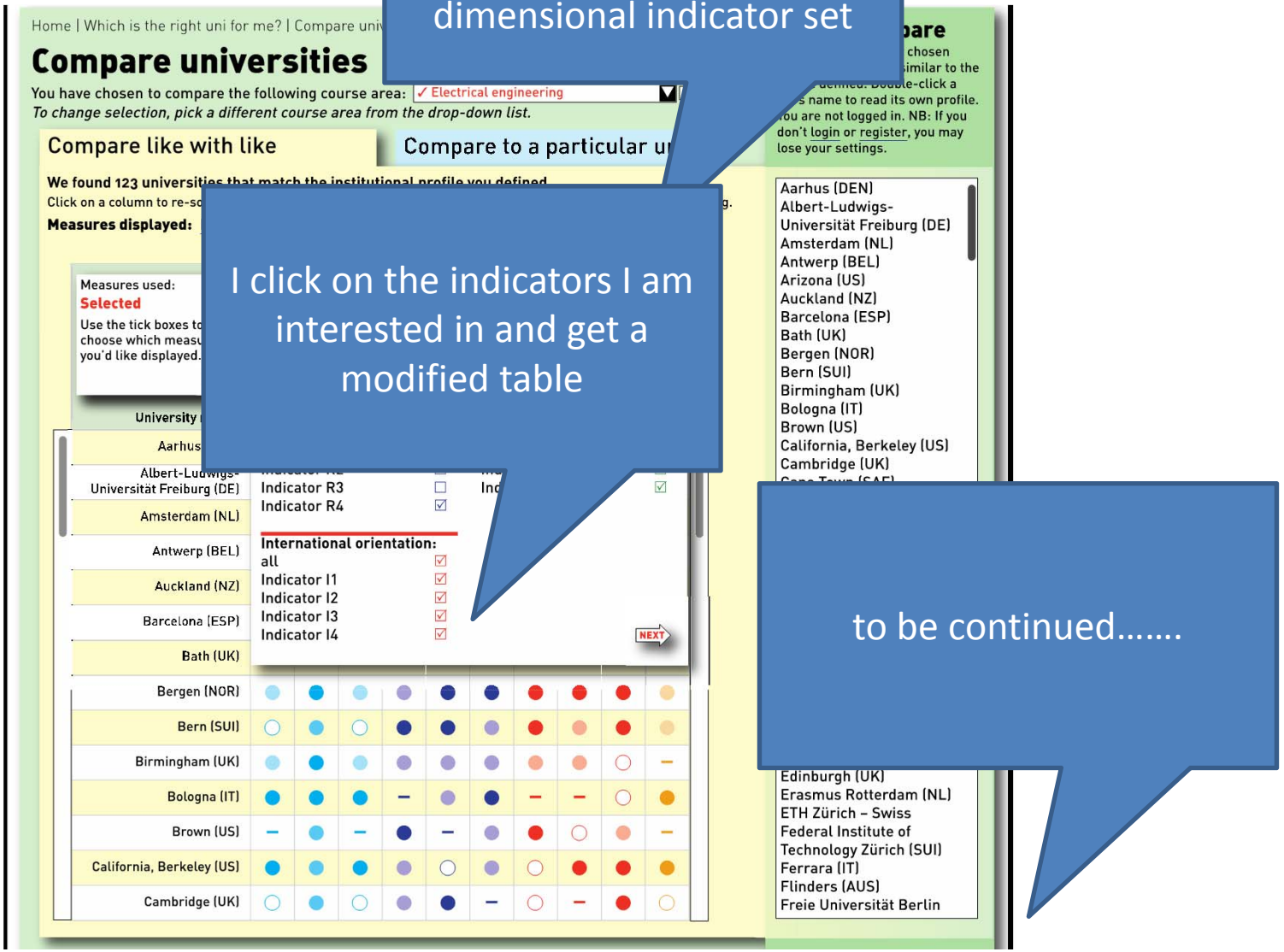
# In bo… be a ranking among *thos…*

an overview of the most popular indicators is displayed

a performance profile of the universities becomes transparent (group approach: bottom – middle-top group)



… with the possibility to … g by selecting indicators acc… erences



# How do participating institutions benefit from U-Multirank?

## Basic benefits

- Visibility for mobile students with programmes
- Visibility of specific performance profile
- differentiated internal SW-analysis, evidence-based internal discussions rectorate-faculties
- marketing, communication of strengths
- demonstration of international openness

## Additional analysis of their own data

- Compared with the total sample
- Institutional & field-based data
- Detailed analysis of student survey

## Option to support benchmarking networks

- Either for informal networks or organisations
- Comparisons among members
- Protected area in website

# What does participation demand from universities?

**There are no fees for participation !**

**Participation in data collection**

- Institutional data – including profile indicators
- Field-based data
- Burden depends on internal data/controlling systems
- Participation in student survey

**Other data are from other sources**

- Bibliometric data / indicators
- Patent data

# Agenda

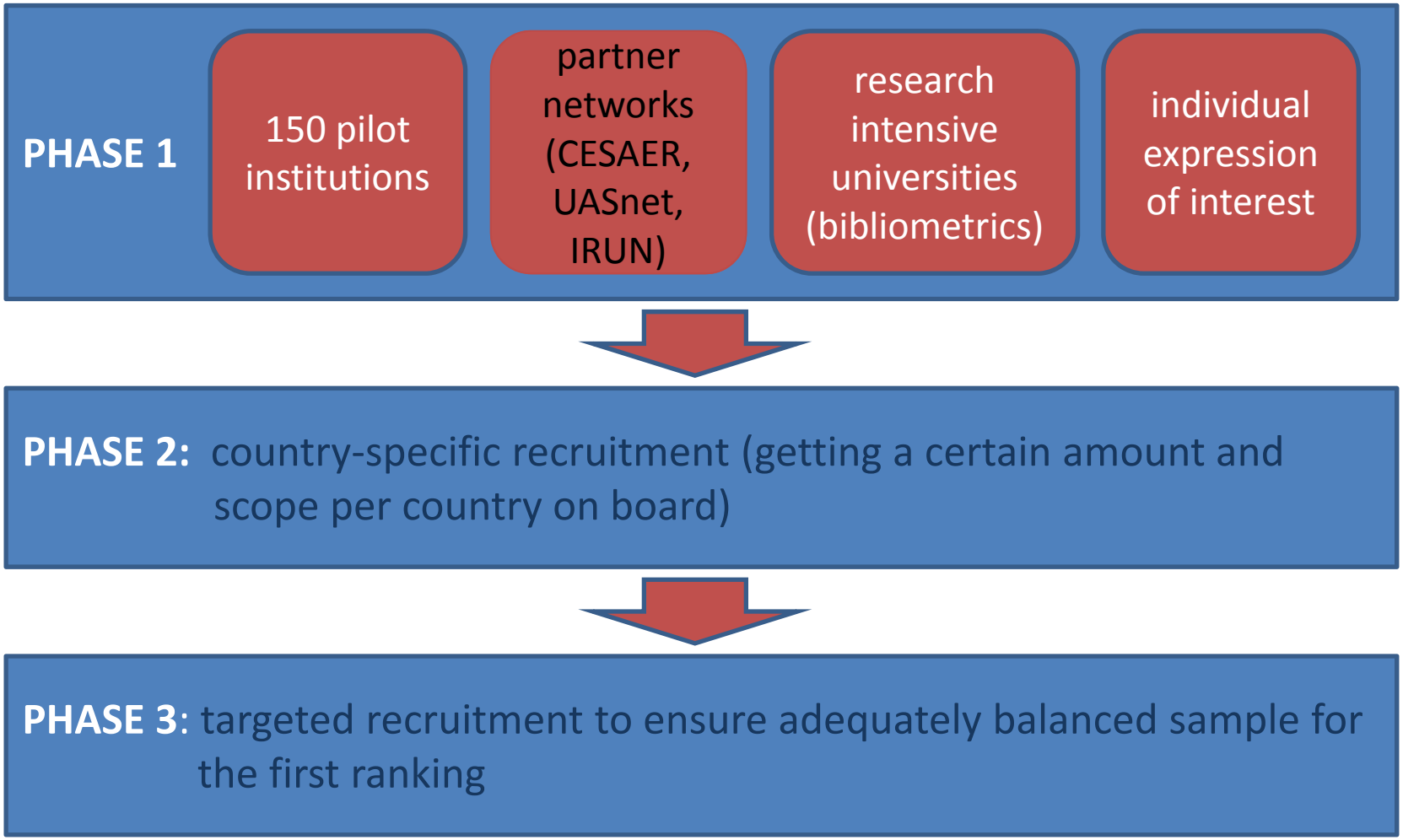
**Basic facts about U-Multirank**

**The benefits of U-Multirank**

**Activities and next steps**

# What will be the next steps?

## *- Recruitment of institutions (target: 500)*



# What will be the next steps?

## Registration

- Registration, see recruitment strategy

## Continuous communication & support

- detailed information about data collection process and schedule
- transparency about all steps and activities
- responsiveness channels

## Data collection

- starting June 2013 (institutional and field-based questionnaire)
- Student survey: students can be invited from June to November

***(publication of first ranking: early 2014)***

# But there might be limits to rankings ...

***„You‘re kidding! You count publications?“***

# Information / Contact

- Information about U-Multirank

  www.u-multirank.eu

- Final report of the feasibility study

  http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc/multirank_en.pdf

- Contact/Expression of interest in participation

  info@u-multirank.eu