

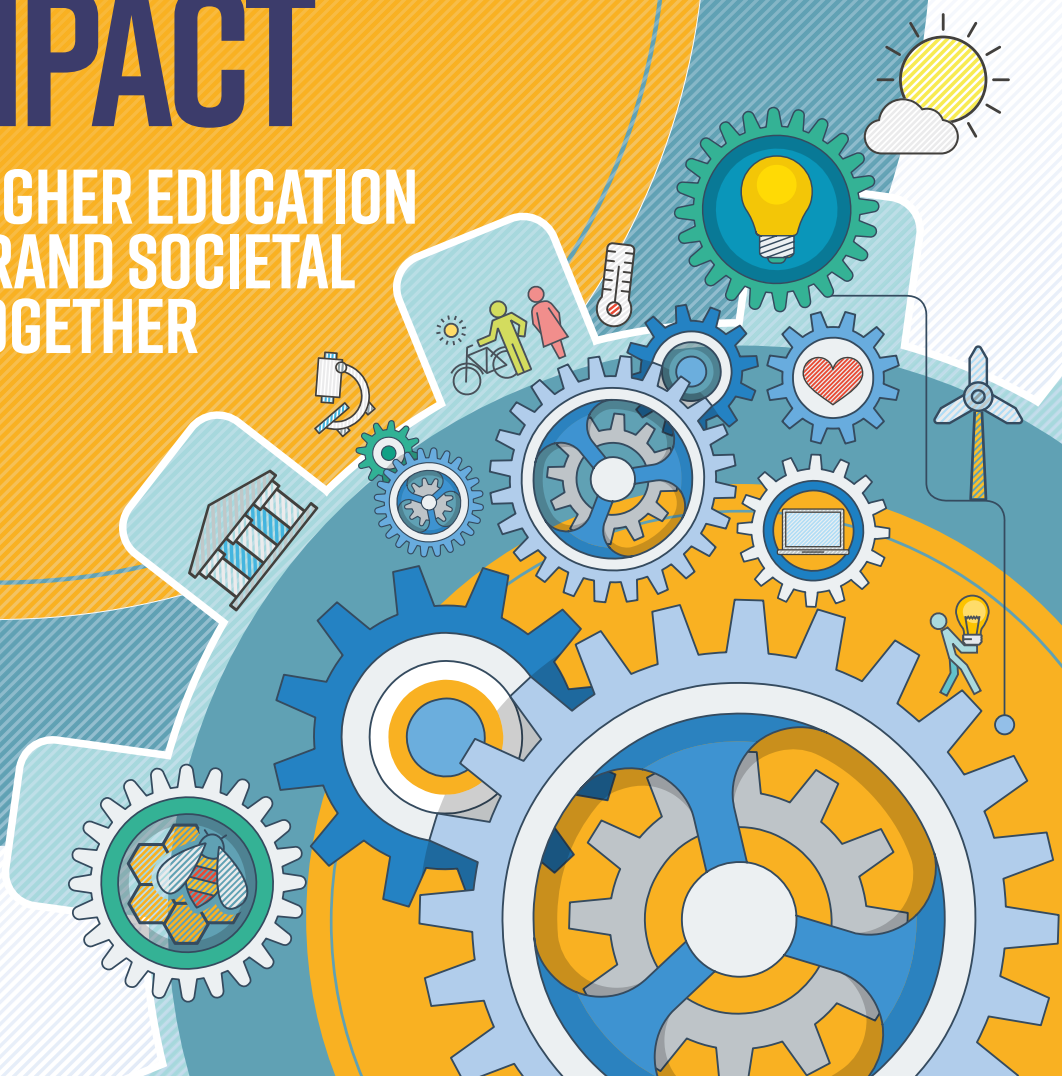


CampusEngage

A HOW TO
GUIDE

ENGAGED RESEARCH PLANNING FOR IMPACT

SOCIETY AND HIGHER EDUCATION
ADDRESSING GRAND SOCIETAL
CHALLENGES TOGETHER





Engaged research

Describes a wide range of rigorous research approaches and methodologies that share a common interest in collaborative engagement with the community and aim to improve, understand or investigate an issue of public interest or concern, including societal challenges. Engaged research is advanced *with* community partners rather than *for* or about them.

A great deal of engaged research literature refers to ‘community’ engagement. In the context of this document, ‘community’ refers to a range of public research stakeholders, including public or professional service and product users, policy makers, members of the public, civil and civic society organisations (CSOs) and others actors.

Planning for Impact

The following How to Guide on planning for impact and setting impact targets is informed by a comprehensive review of grey and academic literature on research and innovation impact. It is also informed by a national and international consultation with over 350 researchers, policy makers, funding agency personnel and community partners. The information provided is not intended to be prescriptive, but rather attempts to inspire and guide researchers when planning for engaged research projects and funding applications.

Engaged Research maximises impact by:

- Allowing for greater public accountability;
- Requiring tacit knowledge exchange to address societal challenges;
- Setting evidence-informed research impact performance indicators;
- Stimulating a stronger external demand for innovative policy, practice, products and services;
- Increasing reuse of data and decreasing duplication of effort;
- Maximising the value of research investment and providing a better return on investment;
- Creating better public support and understanding of the importance of research in our everyday lives.

Deciding on intended impact?

The early engagement of stakeholders, including researchers, public service and product users, and policy makers, for example, enables a better understanding of the relevance of the research and, in return, the potential for knowledge translation, positive outcomes and longer-term impacts. The consensus which emerged from the national and international consultations that informed this document indicated that impact is more readily achieved when it is factored into the planning of a research project. Campus Engage recommends a logic model approach for effective project planning that allows relevant research stakeholders to systematically work through the connections and components of a project and set appropriate and realistic impact targets.

Logic modelling: A planning tool for success

A logic model allows the research team to perform a situation and needs analysis and refine the research question or hypothesis. It can support the team to plan for impact by agreeing to and setting targets for the intended longer-term effect on the societal challenge or issue of concern.

A logic model identifies the inputs and activities, requiring the project team to allocate the available resources to deliver the research project. The outputs are clearly identified as the planned activities based on the allocation of resources. Outcomes are the anticipated short-term results of the research project and its outputs. See the Logic Model below which presents this information graphically.

Outcome vs Impact

While the terms *outcome* and *impact* are sometimes used interchangeably, there is an important distinction between the two. Outcomes are more immediate than most forms of impact. Outcomes can be considered as intermediate steps towards longer-term impacts. The importance of individual indicators of success varies by discipline and sector, and there can be a significant time lag between inputs and outputs and between outputs and impact.

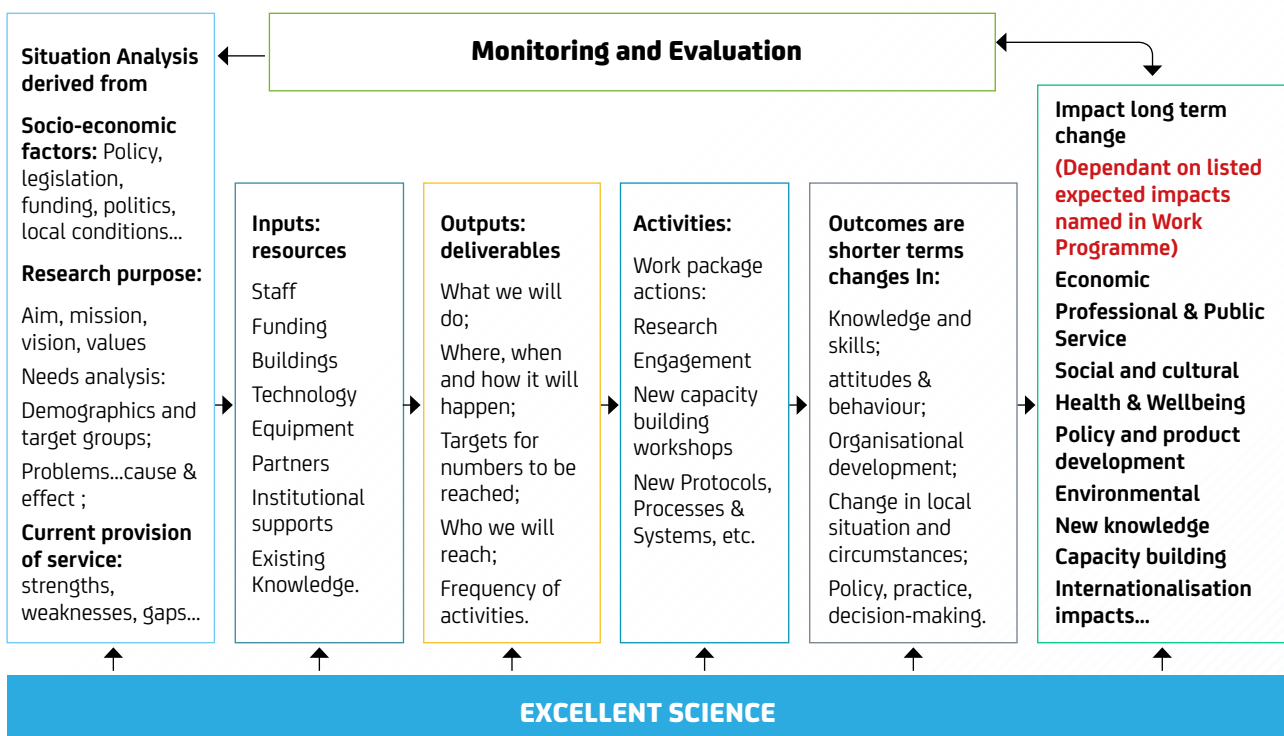


Figure: A sample of a logic model based on W. K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide (2004).

*Key message: Impact sections don't exist in isolation, they must be connected to excellent science and implementation plans.

Thinking universally about research impact

Effective communication and engagement between research stakeholders is key to defining appropriate, responsive metrics, or key performance indicators. Measurement of performance indicators can be applied both during the project (formative indicators) and upon completion (summative indicators). However, during a project, new findings and discoveries may result in unexpected outcomes which highlight the importance of flexibility and time-sensitive monitoring to assess impact during the lifetime of the project and beyond.

A comparative analysis of existing impact categories in current Irish and EU research calls illustrated a good deal of overlap between types of impact in different discipline specific classification systems, and some notable absences. These shortcomings are addressed in the following re-organisation of categories in order to present a single all-inclusive and transdisciplinary Impact Framework for Engaged Research.

The Campus Engage Impact Framework below is based on a synthesis of current impact categories used in the Irish research context*.

Impact Categories

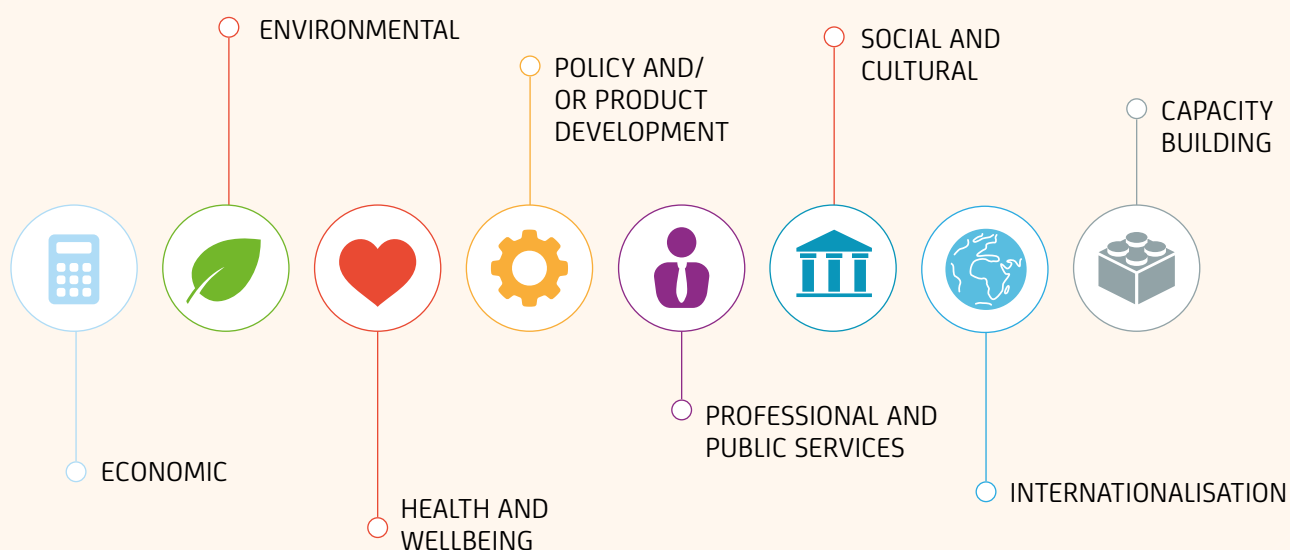


Figure: Impact categories for consideration by research teams.

The Campus Engage Impact Framework

This proposed Framework does not differentiate between engaged research impacts categories in terms of their intrinsic value or importance. Each funding call will, of course, have its own criteria and some categories will be more relevant than others depending on the subject matter. Not all of the areas listed here will be applicable to all engaged research initiatives. Therefore, the first suggested step for researchers, when applying this Framework, is to come together with research stakeholders to create a logic model and decide on appropriate impact areas, key performance indicators that are relevant to the research. Importantly, this approach may be applied to a research project of any size from an individual undergraduate or doctoral piece of work, to a large national or international research programme.

* Reference documents:

- Science Foundation Ireland (2015) "Broadening the Scope of Impact. Defining, assessing and measuring impact of major public research programmes, with lessons from 6 small advanced economies" by the Small Advanced Economies Initiative;
- Health Research Board (2016) Impact categories for evaluating HRB funded research;
- Irish Humanities Alliance (2016) "Impact & the Humanities. Workshop Report & Policy Recommendations";
- European Commission (2015) "Horizon 2020 Indicators, Assessing the Results and Impact of H2020".

*NEW KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

Whilst some current impact categories list 'knowledge production' as a type of impact, the consensus in our workshop consultations was that this is an aim of all research activities. Knowledge production has, therefore, been retained as a cross-cutting impact that should be present in all impact categories, and includes:

- New peer reviewed publications and citations
- Presentations to national and international conferences
- New 'grey literature' including research reports, interviews, policy briefings, editorials, newsletters, web articles, social media, presentations with/to stakeholders
- New systematic reviews or findings
- Increased availability of evidence including open access data
- Establishment of new datasets, databases or research data
- Conceptual impact.



Economic Impacts

Beneficiaries of economic impacts may include individuals or groups. Impacts may provide direct benefit to businesses or other organisations whose activity helps create jobs and revenue. Additionally, the benefits may be more widely spread in terms of developing the conditions and environment to sustain productive economic activity or to advance long-term cost savings due to improved practices and processes. Possible impacts may include, but are not limited to:

- New or expanded products, licenses, or services created
- Spinout or start-up businesses registered
- Improved performance or processes adopted
- Employment created or increased
- Improved international reputation for investment in Ireland
- More efficient use of public resources
- Leveraging of national and international funding
- Increased income generated
- Reduced redundancies and costs
- Conceptual impact.



Environmental Impacts

Environmental impacts are those in which the key beneficiaries are the natural and built environment with its ecosystem services, together with societies, individuals or groups who benefit as a result. Possible impacts may include, but are not limited to:

- Improving awareness and understanding of climate change and its consequences
- Stimulation of public debate and awareness on the environment
- Provision of information to civil and civic societies
- Environmental policy or planning decisions are evidence-informed
- Improved management or conservation of natural resources to advance climate justice
- Improved management of environmental risks or hazards
- Improved private or public services to meet relevant environmental policies or goals
- New/improved technologies or processes to reduce pollution and/or the impact of pollutants
- Improvement in sustainable use of resources for resilient societies
- Improved understanding of health risks to livestock and disease risks to crops for better health and food security
- Improved built environment infrastructure including transportation systems and land use.



Health and Wellbeing Impacts

Beneficiaries may include individuals, groups or targeted populations whose health and wellbeing outcomes have been improved or enhanced, or where potential harm has been mitigated. Possible impacts may include, but are not limited to:

- Better national or international health and wellbeing outcomes due to new or improved interventions, services, drug/treatments/therapies, diagnostic or medical technologies, care practices or processes
- Improved health and wellbeing at an individual level
- Reduced inequalities in health status and health and social care utilisation through information and policies targeting vulnerable/disadvantaged groups
- Increased efficiency in the delivery of public health and social services, as well as health-related interventions and services delivered by NGOs and others in the community
- Decisions by public, private and voluntary stakeholders informed by research evidence
- Improved quality of life due to improved health and wellbeing services/interventions, products or processes
- Enhanced animal health and welfare
- Reduction in costs and delays for treatments, interventions, practices, and processes due to newly developed or improved alternatives (e.g. new treatments, interventions, drugs, devices or diagnostics)
- Mitigation of risks to health or well-being through preventative or early intervention services and measures
- Increase in number of participants enrolled in clinical and community-based trials
- Increase in number of individuals engaging in healthy lifestyles.



Policy and/or product development impacts

Beneficiaries may include individuals or groups from professional, governmental and non-governmental organisations and charities and groups. The impact may be top-down through policy changes and bottom-up through

behavioural practice. Possible impacts may include, but are not limited to:

- Implementation, revision or evaluation of policies to improve efficiency, efficacy of public services,
- products and processes, and government regulation
- Policy and related budget decisions, changes to legislation, regulations, guidelines, or funding are evidence-informed
- Revised educational curricula, across all levels, informed by new knowledge
- Commissioned reports or projects from government departments or agencies
- Policy briefing papers, practical handbooks and other grey material produced for / disseminated to relevant professionals, policy makers, and civic and civil society organisations
- Patents and other IP applications and award of commercialization support grants to develop products or services
- License agreements and revenues generated as a result of spin-out companies or formal collaborative partnerships between researchers and relevant research stakeholders.



Professional and Public Services Impacts

Beneficiaries may include public and private organisations or individuals involved in the development and delivery of professional services. The impact may be top-down through policy changes and bottom-up through behavioural practice. Possible impacts may include, but are not limited to:

- New or improved professional standards, working practices, guidelines or training
- Quality, efficiency or productivity of a service
- Professional body practices are evidence-informed
- Practice or process changes in companies or other organisations through capacity building
- Increased inter-agency collaboration
- Improved services evaluation methods and technologies
- Improvements in risk management across public and private sectors
- Advancements against strategic plans.



Social and Cultural Impacts

Beneficiaries may include individuals, organisations or communities whose quality of life, knowledge and/or capacity is positively affected through creative practice, performance and increased cultural understanding. These may include but are not limited to:

- Enhanced opportunities for creativity, self-expression and human development
- Increased appreciation and/or design of cultural services such as museums, galleries, libraries
- Attitudinal changes, education and understanding
- Stimulation or informing of public debate or interest
- Greater awareness of the public's role and responsibility in contributing to solving social challenges
- Increased confidence of the general public to address issues affecting them
- Exchange of public tacit knowledge to inform new or improved products, services and processes
- Improved quality of life through improved access to services
- Local, regional or national development and regeneration plans
- New processes for responding to public research needs and partnerships
- Improved human performance due to new or changed technologies or processes.



Internationalisation Impacts

Direct beneficiaries include Irish-based researchers striving to improve their international reputation, international researchers who wish to locate part or all of their research to Ireland and CSOs who want to increase their international engagement and reputation. Indirect beneficiaries may include research stakeholders from relevant local, national or international public and private organizations. Possible impacts may include, but are not limited to:

- Success of researchers and relevant entities in attaining international research funding, for example, through EU Framework programmes
- Improved international reputation of Ireland in the research arena

- Attraction and retention of international talent
- New connections to international expertise providing access to state-of-the-art knowledge, ideas and publics
- Leveraging of international funding through industrial and collaborative research
- New national/international collaborations or strategic partnerships formed with other research teams, community and industry partners or relevant agencies.
- Increased global social responsibility, cultural awareness, and languages
- Contribution to international relations and the international profile and reputation of Ireland.



Capacity Building Impacts

- Education, training and improved skills of current and future populations and workers for public and industry services, and academia
- Improved relevancy of educational curricula at all levels
- Higher degrees and research experience obtained by research personnel
- Retention rates of research personnel in national research system
- Increased leveraged funding due to number and level of highly skilled researchers
- Increased national, EU, international social capital
- Increased research capacity in CSOs
- Increased levels of engagement of members of the public with research, and corresponding levels of confidence in public-science dialogue
- Spin-off projects developed and further research funding leveraged
- Development and use of novel research techniques
- Establishment of new datasets, databases or research data lodged in national database.

Guidance for Drafting Impact Statements

What is a Research Proposal Impact Statement?

An impact statement is the articulation of the intended effect of your initiative. This will include a value judgement about the intended goals, as articulated by relevant stakeholders and partners to the project.

Here are other top tips for drafting impact statements:

1. Choose jargon free, non-technical language;
2. Articulate how the team will engage or involve beneficiaries, and how the translation of knowledge will effect the societal challenge;
3. Use a logic model to identify stakeholder needs, inputs, outputs and activities, outcomes, and proposed impact;
4. Aim to assess research impact as you proceed (formative) and upon completion (summative);
5. Consider the background and range of expertise of those assessing the impact statement, along with the requirements identified in the call;
6. Articulate who or what is expected to change, how the change will take place, and the estimated timeframe for when this change will happen;
7. Set targets against the chosen key performance indicators to monitor progress;
8. Consider qualitative evidence across a range of impact categories;
9. Consider dissemination, knowledge exchange and translational activities to scale up the project in the future and maximise impact.

Acknowledgements

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