

# Research Impact Evaluation Framework: Building blocks for impact narratives

## Core evaluation questions

- I. **Impacts:** *Who or what changed, in what ways, and how do we know?*
- II. **Causes of impact:** *Why/how did changes occur? Which factors or processes caused impact?*
- III. **Lessons and actions:** *What lessons can be learned? Which actions should follow to generate impact?*

## Impacts

### Ia. What changed? (Progress towards goals)

- 1) **Instrumental:** *changes to plans, decisions, behaviours, practices, actions, policies*
- 2) **Conceptual:** *changes to knowledge, awareness, attitudes, emotions*
- 3) **Capacity-building:** *changes to skills and expertise*
- 4) **Enduring connectivity:** *changes to the number and quality of relationships and trust*
- 5) **Culture/attitudes towards knowledge exchange,** *and research impact itself*

### Ib. Who changed? (Influencers and influenced)

- 1) **Policy-makers** *(including regulatory bodies; local, national and international)*
- 2) **Practitioners** *(public, private, NGO)*
- 3) **Communities** *(of place or interest, general public)*
- 4) **Researchers** *(within and beyond the project and institution)*
- 5) **Other**

### Ic. How do we know? (Evidence and feedback)

- Which indicators and methods should be used, and questions asked, to demonstrate impacts, and progress towards generation of impacts?

## Causes of impact

### II. Why/how did changes occur?

- 1) **Problem-framing:** *Level of importance; tractability of the problem; active negotiation of research questions; appropriateness of research design.*
- 2) **Research management:** *Research culture; integration between disciplines and teams; promotion of research services; planning; strategy.*
- 3) **Inputs:** *Funding; staff capacity and turnover; legacy of previous work; access to equipment and resources.*
- 4) **Outputs:** *Quality and usefulness of content; appropriate format.*
- 5) **Dissemination:** *Targeted and efficient delivery of outputs to users and other audiences.*
- 6) **Engagement:** *Level and quality of interaction with users and other stakeholders; co-production of knowledge; collaboration during design, dissemination and uptake of outputs.*
- 7) **Users:** *Influence of knowledge intermediaries, e.g. 'champions' and user groups; incentives and reinforcement to encourage uptake.*
- 8) **Context and contingencies:** *Societal, political, economic, biophysical, climate and geographical factors, risks and uncertainties.*

## Lessons and actions

### III. Lessons learned for impact identification and generation?

- 1) What worked? What could (or should) have been done differently?
- 2) What could (or should) be done in the future?