GUIDANCE FOR WRITING IMPACT STATEMENTS (FUNDING)

This document offers general support for writing impact plans. Please consult the specific funder details for any specific requirements. As research projects vary so widely between disciplines and sub disciplines, it is very difficult to be prescriptive/offer templates. Instead, applicants are advised to plan their impact using the guidance below and write their plan/ pathway accordingly.

Crucially make sure you present WHAT impact will happen, for WHO and HOW.

Consider the following questions and build answers into your plan:

- **What are your impacts** (i.e. what will change as a result of the project / what are the tangible benefits / what is achievable because the project has been done). This is NOT the same as what is the value of the project. The project can be extremely valuable, academically rigorous and worthwhile; impact relates to the effect this then has beyond academia)

- **What pathways** do you need to follow to achieve impact? (ie. How will you get from project to impact? What are the steps?

- How do you need to **translate materials** to engage your stakeholders? Consider how messages need translating for the relevant audiences / formats need changing.

- Who are the **audiences** for the outputs, and what are the impacts on them?

- How are your **impacts facilitated by your outputs**? Making research available is only one part of the process; how will this be taken up by people to achieve the benefits you expect.

- What impact is **realistic** within the project and what is expected longer term?

- What **resources** do you need to realise impacts?

- What **funder aims/objectives** are you achieving?

- How will you **track** impact and demonstrate its achievement?

- How will you **communicate and engage** (not just disseminate)?

- What is your **scale** of impact eg. Local? Regional? National? International

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Reviews of previous bids suggest that:

GOOD impact statements tend to be:

- Concise language, with formatting supporting the clarity of the plan (i.e. clear structure makes the impact feel structured. This may or may not include bullets, tables, bold titles etc.
- Clear unidirectional impacts (e.g. 'reduced' not 'influence on')
- Key points are 'headlined'. This may be at the start of a paragraph, in a title, or emphasised within the text itself
- Clear sense of stakeholders, and how these will be engaged
- Clear scale / quantification / metrics of impact (e.g. 'target to increase productivity by 10%') and justification of why/how this is achievable
- Clear sense of paths and how impact will be achieved ('how')
- Justified type, scale, timescale and methods to achieve impact. Evidence based expectations
- Clear time frames, particularly what is achievable directly from the project and what is a longer term benefit/exploitation possibilities as a result of the project.
- Offers detail/ sense of progression / stepwise achievement of impact over time (e.g. X will do Y) with any dependencies ('what and who') and pre-conditions for achieving impact
- Realistic, not over promising and articulating what scale of effect is achievable from the project. Clarify what will be achieved, what is 'expected' through to what is a potentially achievable future exploitation. This all needs backing up by sensible routes and methods.
- Active language ('achieves', 'creates', 'leads to')

BAD tend to be:

- Overly narrative, using long text phrases to try and convey a sense of impact without any concrete statements.
- Overly rely on mechanisms which just put the work 'out' but don't actively push/target/engage. Be wary of overusing words such as dissemination (one way activity), contribution (rather than impact as contribution suggests an unquantified and passive effect), 'hope' and general over reliance on pushing through academic routes only
- Presumes that the work being 'done and available' will lead to impact
- Non-directional indicators/effect
- Unjustified routes / effects
- Assumes the reader accepts that the project will solve the problems on which the research is premised.
- Poor English
- Emphasises (e.g. bold) words like 'important' and 'relevant'. This suggests other things aren't
- Mixed sections; where there are section headings, sentences are misplaced (e.g. talk about cost effectiveness within quality of life section)
- Passive language (e.g. 'Allows', 'hope')
- Scatter gun lists of metrics and indicators
- Disproportionate time on narrative / background, less on specific impacts
- Broad / non committal impacts (e.g influence on….related to…..)
- Very general overall

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