Impact Statement

AN IMPACT STATEMENT demonstrates the contribution of a body of research to economic, environmental, and/or social development and states the actions proposed to help realise this impact. It is a brief summary written primarily in lay, non-technical language, outlining the quantifiable payoff of research for society by addressing the following overarching questions:

- WHO will benefit from the research?
- HOW will they benefit from the research?

Impacts should be **tangible, measurable, and time-specific.** They may be **short-term, medium-term, and long-term**. The focus of impact can be at an **individual, group, institutional, system or community level**.

A high-quality impact statement should include a credible implementation plan outlining pathways to impact citing realistic timelines and stakeholders. Do not confuse impacts with outcomes and outputs (see diagram below).

The HRB provides funding for patient-oriented research, population health research, and health services research. Examples of **beneficiaries** of this research might **i**nclude:

- General Public (e.g. prospective patients)
- Public Sector (e.g. health care workers)
- Policy Makers
- Academia (e.g. research students, research staff, international knowledge base)

Tips for drafting an Impact Statement

• Choose jargon free, non-technical language

• Identify stakeholder needs, outcomes, outputs, milestones and deliverables aligned with the proposed impact

• Consider the background and range of expertise of those assessing the impact statement, along with the requirements identified in the call

• Articulate who or what is expected to change, how the change will take place, and the estimated timeframe for when this change will happen

• Set targets against the chosen key performance indicators to monitor progress

• Consider dissemination, knowledge exchange, and translational activities to scale up the project in the future and maximise impact

• Articulate how the team will engage or involve beneficiaries, and how the translation of knowledge will affect the societal challenge.

Key Impact Categories

These may be used in planning, monitoring, and evaluation. For full description of each category and a longer list of examples, see Campus Engage: Engaged Research p. 41-8.

Economic Impacts

Examples:

New or expanded products, licenses, or services created; spinout or start-up businesses registered; employment created or increased; improved international reputation for investment in Ireland

Environmental Impacts

Examples: environmental policy or planning decisions are evidence-informed; improved private or public services to meet relevant environmental policies or goals; improved understanding of health risks to livestock and disease risks to crops for better health and food security.

Health and Wellbeing Impacts

Examples: 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; Increased efficiency in the delivery of public health and social services, as well as health-related.

Policy and/or Product Development

Examples:

Implementation, revision or evaluation of policies to improve efficiency, efficacy of public services, products and processes, and government regulation; patents and other IP applications and award of commercialization support grants to develop products or services.

Professional and Public Service Impacts

Examples:

new or improved professional standards, working practices, guidelines or training; improvement in quality, efficiency or productivity of a service; advancements against strategic plans.

Social and Cultural Impacts

Examples: enhanced opportunities for creativity, self-expression and human development; increased appreciation and/or design of cultural services such as museums, galleries, libraries; stimulation or informing of public debate or interest; local, regional or national development and regeneration plans.

Internationalisation Impacts

Examples: improved international reputation of Ireland in the research arena; attraction and retention of international talent; new national/international collaborations or strategic partnerships formed with other research teams, community and industry partners or relevant agencies.

Capacity Building Impacts

Examples:

education, training and improved skills of current and future populations and workers for public and industry services, and academia; development and use of novel research techniques; establishment of new datasets, databases or research data lodged in national database.

NB Each funding call will have its own criteria and some impact categories will be more relevant/important than others. Not all categories will be applicable to every project. Therefore, the first suggested step for researchers when applying this framework is to decide on key areas of impact and specify the key performance indicators that are relevant to the research.

Pathway to Impact

If you want your research to have an impact, you need to find new ways of making your work both accessible and understandable to the people who can benefit from or use your work most. For example, if your results might result in increased efficiency of delivery of a public health service – what would you need to do to ensure your results reach the right audience, and are implemented? Collaborators and stakeholders can be very important here – consulting with the public, steering groups industry partners etc. You should discuss methods for communications and engagement, who you will collaborate with to ensure potential beneficiaries have the opportunity to benefit, and the resources required to do this. Activities might include: collaborative research, workshops, website, publications, conferences, public lectures, networks, freeware (data) tools, new methodologies, exhibitions, road shows, media training, commercialisation, technology, on-line databases, secondments/placements, skills development.

For more details about impact and impact statements, see:

http://www.fasttrackimpact.com/what-is-impact;

http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/; and

http://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/dfg_im_profil/zahlen_fakten/programm_evaluation/impact_assessment_wg2.pdf

http://www.campusengage.ie/sites/default/files/FINAL%20JAN%2016_ER%20Report%202016%20Jan%20v2.pdf