

Impact writing: How can research administrators collaborate across administrative fields and work with researchers to motivate, promote, identify and describe impact

NARMA Vårkonferanse 2019

Anne Sofie Lægran & Esther De Smet



On the agenda

Context of impact  
Your institution and you  
Training researchers

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The background features a series of concentric, overlapping circles in light gray, some solid and some dashed, creating a ripple effect. A prominent red callout box is centered on the page, containing the text 'Context of Impact Support'.

# Context of Impact Support

What's in a name?

Getting a grip  
on (societal)  
impact

*Slido Q1 – let's check your starting position*

*Slido Q2 – discuss in pairs what you consider impact and provide us with two examples*

What's in a name?

Getting a grip  
on (societal)  
impact

Shorthand definition:

**“demonstrable benefits of  
research in the non-academic  
world”**

Impact may be big or small,  
instrumental (direct change) or  
conceptual (ideas, feelings).  
quantitative or qualitative  
There is no single type of impact.

What's in a name?

Getting a grip  
on (societal)  
impact

**UNDERSTANDING TERMINOLOGY** is key:

- Knowledge exchange
- Outcome
- Pathways to impact
- Attention
- Reach
- Significance
- Dissemination
- Implementation
- Uptake
- ...

**Identify what is process (pathway to) and  
what is effect/result (impact)**

## Pathway to Impact

One project has many pathways



What's in a name?

Getting a grip  
on (societal)  
impact

- **Non-linear**
- **Iterative**
- **Throughout the research life cycle**
- **Relationships**
- **Attribution**
- **Timelag**
- **Serendipity**
- **Context**



What's in a name?

Getting a grip  
on (societal)  
impact

**INTEGRATING** is key:

What problem does the research address?

How can it contribute to a solution?

-> Engagement throughout the process from idea to impact



Your institution and you

What's your role?

Research admin  
and impact

*Slido Q3 – how do you see your  
role in supporting impact?*

What's your role?

Research admin  
and impact

There are **different roles** in supporting impact:

- Who does what?
- Do they work together?
- What is actually needed?

**REMEMBER:** impact of research is a shared responsibility when it comes to enabling, make sure your researchers take up their own responsibility.

What's your role?

Research admin  
and impact

## **CHANGING FOCUS OF EXISTING ROLES**

Technology Transfer Offices/Innovation

Science Communication

Press office/Communications & Marketing

Research Management Information Systems

Research Support

What's your role?

Research admin  
and impact

## **NEW ROLES TO SUPPORT IMPACT:**

Knowledge Exchange  
Impact  
Engagement

Officer  
Manager  
Advisor  
Coordinator

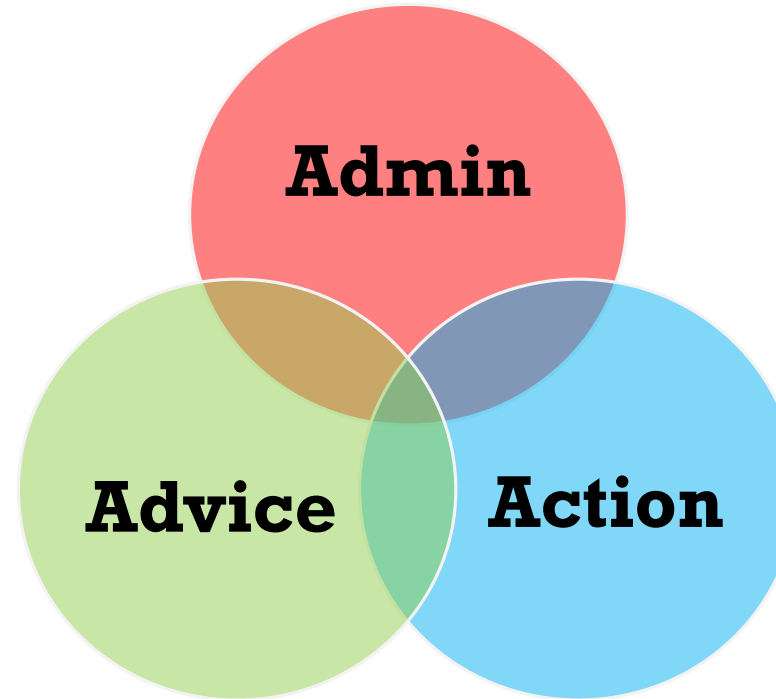
- Relevant academic background
- Relevant background from industry/public sector
- Ability to translate research to lay and specialist users
- Knowledge of how change occurs in the relevant field

What's your role?

Research admin  
and impact

**Enabling the  
academic to  
engage better**

**Making life easier for  
the academic**



**Delivering  
activities for the  
academic**

What's your role?

Research admin  
and impact

**ENABLING THE ACADEMIC TO ENGAGE  
BETTER**

- Identify potential users/audiences
- Identify when and how to best engage them
- Brokering with small B – making introductions
- Identify ways of capturing and tracking impact

**Advice**



What's your role?

Research admin  
and impact

## **DELIVERING ACTIVITIES FOR THE ACADEMIC**

- Broker with big B - liaise with stakeholders and know when to provide research based input
- Translate research findings for
  - Web and social media
  - Print materials
  - Policy briefings, leaflets, posters, presentations
- Monitoring and evaluation

**Action**

Institutional health check

Is your  
organisation  
ready?

## **IMPACT LITERACY**

= the understanding of the processes (how)  
and people-based skills (who) needed to  
generate real world benefits (what)

## Institutional health check

Is your  
organisation  
ready?

### STEP 1: build INSTITUTIONAL impact literacy

1. Commitment
2. Connectivity
3. Co-production
4. Competencies
5. Clarity

Let's assess together!

Julie Bayley & David Phipps – workbook available via Emerald Publishing

## Institutional health check

Is your  
organisation  
ready?

### 1. Commitment

	Yes	In part	No	Don't know
1. Is there an organisational impact strategy?				
2. Is there an impact implementation plan?				
3. Is there institutional leadership in impact?				
4. Is there dedicated support and advice available for impact?				
5. Are supports provided to researchers throughout the research process from planning through to assessment?				
6. Are there dedicated systems to support impact information?				
7. Are there impact development opportunities for both academic and non-academic staff?				
8. Are there impact development opportunities for students?				
9. Do incentive and reward structures recognise (and fairly review) impact related work?				
10. Is impact built realistically into workloads?				
11. Is impact possible and sustainable with current levels of dedicated staffing?				
12. Is there sufficient funding (internal or external) to support impact delivery?				
<b>TOTAL</b>				

## Institutional health check

Is your  
organisation  
ready?

### 1. Commitment

*Slido Q4 – is there dedicated support and advice available for impact?*

## Institutional health check

Is your  
organisation  
ready?

### 2. Connectivity

	Yes	Possibly/ partly	No	Don't know
1. Do teams within the organisation who support impact know about each other?				
2. Do teams within the organisation who support impact work together?				
3. Are teams within the organisation cohesive (ie. work well together and towards the same aim)				
4. Are the activities of teams/departments and the organisation's strategy aligned?				
5. Is everyone included in impact provision who needs to be?				
6. Are these varied impact activities coordinated by a person/process?				
<b>TOTAL</b>				

## Institutional health check

Is your  
organisation  
ready?

### 2. Connectivity

*Slido Q5 – do teams within the organisation who support impact work together?*

## Institutional health check

Is your  
organisation  
ready?

### 3. Co-production

	Yes	Possibly/ partly	No	Don't know
1. Does the organisation invest in support and services to facilitate engagement of non-academics for commercial reasons (eg. technology transfer)				
2. Does the organisation invest in support and services to facilitate engagement of non-academics for non-commercial reasons (eg. public engagement)				
3. Does the organisation find and build partnerships with those who might use the research?				
4. Does the organisation have expertise to support researcher co-production?				
5. Is there a website showcasing the organisation's research (to enable people to find and use it?)				
<b>TOTAL</b>				



Institutional health check

Is your  
organisation  
ready?

### 3. Co-production

*Slido Q6 – does your organisation find and build partnerships with those who might use the research?*

## Institutional health check

Is your  
organisation  
ready?

## 4. Competencies

Competency category	Skills related to:
A. Change Management	Creating and managing (organisational / culture) change, shifting conditions from a baseline to goal state
B. Communication	Communicating with a range of stakeholders, both internally and externally, individually and in teams
C. Creating, sourcing and synthesising (research) knowledge	Development, discovery and consolidation of research knowledge to be mobilised
D. Evaluating impact of KMb	Measurement, tracking and recording of the effects (impact) of KMb
E. Facilitating and negotiating	Facilitating, liaising, negotiating the translation of research into adoption and impact
F. Leading, managing and driving KT	Strategic oversight, management and leadership of processes for knowledge mobilisation
G. Managing legal issues and IP	Legal governance, legal processes and intellectual property management
H. Managing partnerships / relationships	Maintaining partnerships and sustaining relationships with engaged external / internal stakeholders
I. Networking and engaging internal / external stakeholders	Establishing new partnerships and building connections
J. Training and capacity building	Supporting the development of KMb skills and understanding, improving individual and organisational competency
K. Understanding, creating and using KMb tools, products and practices	Identification, assessment and integration of KMb best practice and theory/ evidence based tools

## Institutional health check

Is your  
organisation  
ready?

### 4. Competencies

	Yes	Possibly/ partly	No	Don't know
1. Do researchers have the skills to create and monitor impact?				
2. Do research managers have the skills to support impact?				
3. Is there expertise advice available for impact?				
4. Does the institution recognise and invest in development of impact-related skills?				
5. Is there training available to build impact skills?				
6. Is there specialised advice available for intellectual property/legal issues?				
7. Are skills shared between teams?				
<b>TOTAL</b>				

Institutional health check

Is your  
organisation  
ready?

#### 4. Competencies

*Slido Q7 – is there training  
available to build impact skills?*

## Institutional health check

Is your  
organisation  
ready?

### 5. Clarity

	Yes	Possibly/ partly	No	Don't know
1. Do all staff know what impact is?				
2. Do staff understand their 'role' in impact?				
3. Do job descriptions reflect what support staff provide for impact?				
4. Is institutional vision/strategy communicated clearly?				
5. Does the institution recognise the varied pathways and impacts across subject areas?				
6. Are staff aware that traditional measures of research communication (eg. citations) are not sufficient/ appropriate for measuring impact?				
7. Are staff clear on formal drivers and agendas for impact (eg. funding requirements, external assessments)				
<b>TOTAL</b>				

Institutional health check

Is your  
organisation  
ready?

5. Clarity

*Slido Q8 – does your institution recognise the varied pathways and impacts across subject areas?*

## Institutional health check

Is your  
organisation  
ready?

**Before you start advising and supporting your researchers in writing impact statements:**

**Know what your organisation has to offer**



Training researchers



## Multi-step approach

Planning  
Doing  
Evaluating

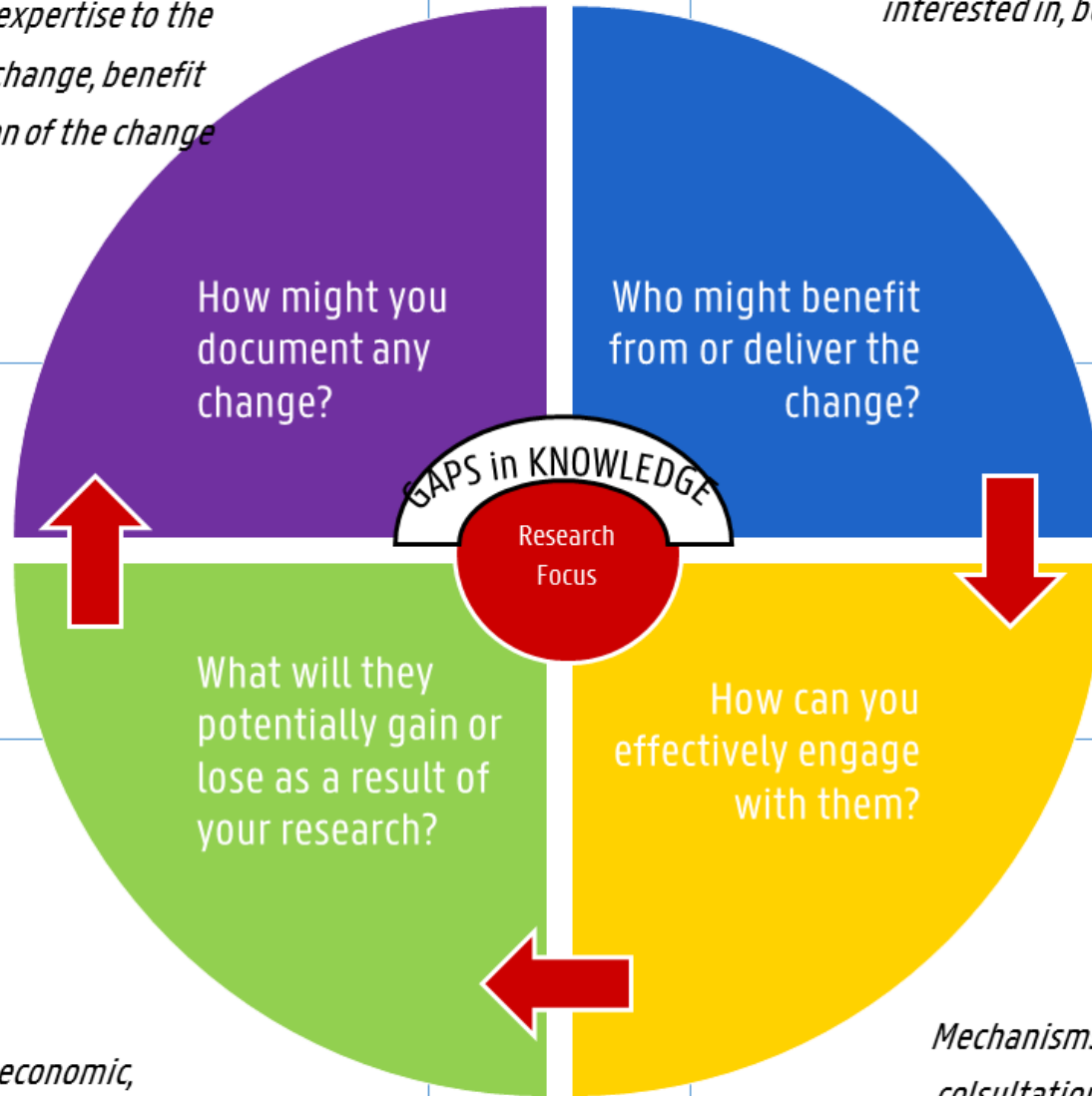
## Multi-step approach

Planning  
Doing  
Evaluating



*Evidence: the breadcrumb trail from research findings & expertise to the ultimate influence, change, benefit – and documentation of the change achieved*

*Beneficiaries– What groups might be interested in, benefit from, deliver or oversee this change?*



GAPS in KNOWLEDGE

Research Focus

How might you document any change?

Who might benefit from or deliver the change?

What will they potentially gain or lose as a result of your research?

How can you effectively engage with them?

*Potential social, economic, commercial, policy, cultural impacts*

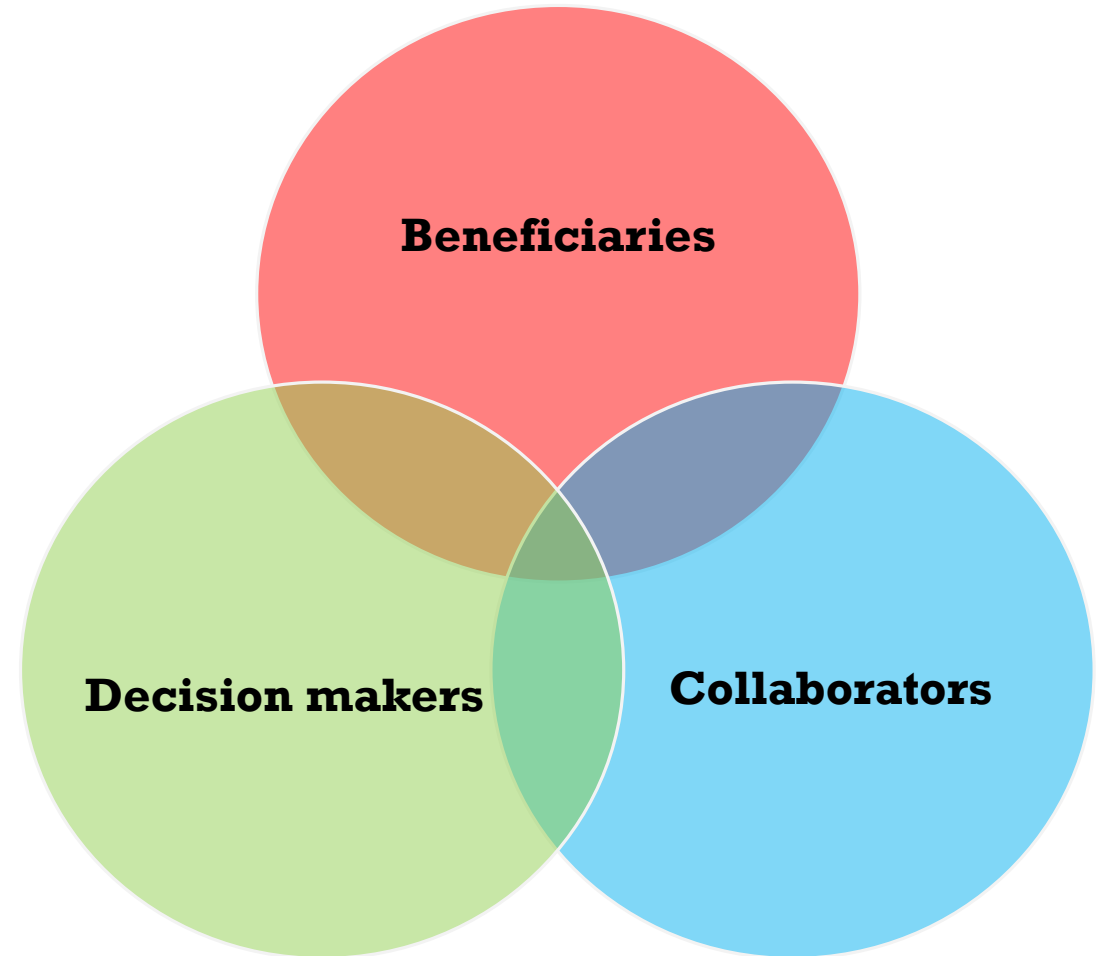
*Mechanisms of collaboration, consultation, communication, (co-)creation, ...*

1. Start from your research focus
2. Identify what is happening (or not) 'out there that you think your research findings may help to change
3. Stakeholder analysis
4. Who might you want to consult, work with or communicate to in order to drive your expertise out there and achieve change?
5. Why should they care? Identify the potential impacts
6. How might you evidence not only any impacts achieved, but how these link back to your research?

**FOR / WITH / BY WHOM?**

**Multi-step approach**

Planning  
Doing  
Evaluating



## Multi-step approach

Planning  
Doing  
Evaluating

Descriptors/indicators

Narratives/impact case studies

*REF guidelines and database of case studies – use wisely*

*Some examples*



## History of Art: Impressionism, Scotland and the Art Market





# Law and Criminology: Enhancing the effectiveness of youth justice policy and practice



# Music, Psychology and Physics:

## The Skoog: A new kind of musical instrument





## Multi-step approach

Planning  
Doing  
Evaluating

### ACTIVITY/OUTPUT

*Exhibition, talk,  
performance, hands-  
on activity*

*Media, Opinion,  
Expert comments*

*Reports & meetings  
to influence decision  
makers*

*New technology,  
spin-out, licensing*

### IMPACT

*Enhanced  
understanding,  
increased  
profile/income*

*Influencing public  
debate*

*Change in legislation,  
guidance,  
professional practice*

*Better products &  
services*

### EVIDENCE

*Audience feedback,  
reviews, tickets  
tourism data*

*Viewing figures  
Response, citation,  
social media,*

*Citation in guidance,  
standards,  
testimonials*

*Revenue, jobs,  
investment,  
testimonials,  
feedback*

End of the session

And?

*Slido Q9 – let's check your  
current position*

End of the session

Want more?

*Accomplishh Guide to impact planning*

<https://www.accomplishh.eu/publications-and-deliverables>

*REF 2014 impact case studies*

<https://impact.ref.ac.uk/casestudies/>

*FastTrack impact resources*

<https://www.fasttrackimpact.com/>