

What is impact?

Impact = the good the researchers do in the world. Our job is to make our research understandable so that people can benefit from it.

Impact versus engagement: Common mistake in funding proposals is that people describe engagement not impact. Thinking about the word "benefit" can help to see where engagement stops and impact begins. What happened next after the engagement? Who benefited from the engagement?

Impact that matters is:

1. Significant - the degree to which the impact has influenced/informed/changed policies, practices, opportunities or perceptions of individuals/communities/organisations
2. Far reaching - the extend and diversity of communities, individuals that have been impacted.

Types of impact: (definitions from website: fasttrackimpact.com)

1. Understanding and awareness (people understand an issue better than they did before because of your research)
2. Attitudes (a change in attitudes typically of a group of people who share similar views, towards a new attitude that brings benefits to them or others)
3. Economy (monetary benefits arising from research, either in terms of money saved, costs avoided or increases in turnover, profit, funding or benefits to groups of people or the environment measured in monetary terms)
4. Environment (benefits from research to genetic diversity, species or habitat conservation, and ecosystems, including the benefits that humans derive from a healthy environment).
5. Health and wellbeing (research that leads to better outcomes for the health of individuals, social groups or public health, including saving lives and improving people's quality of life, and wider benefits for the wellbeing of individuals or social groups, including both physical and social aspects such as emotional, psychological, economic wellbeing and measures of life satisfaction)
6. Policy (the contribution that research makes to new or amended laws, regulations or other policy mechanisms that enable them to meet a defined need or objective that delivers public benefit. Note: you are assessing the extent that your research made a contribution, recognizing that it is likely to be one of many factors influencing policy. It also goes beyond simply influencing policy, to enabling those policies to deliver public benefits. If the policy intervention would have had the same impact without the elements based on your research, can you really claim to have had impact? Arguing for the significance of your contribution is therefore an essential part of demonstrating that your research achieved policy impacts)



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7. Decision making and behaviour change (whether directly or indirectly (via changes in understanding/awareness and attitudes), research can inform a wide range of individual, group and organizational behaviours and decisions leading to impacts that go beyond the economy, environment, health and wellbeing or policy)
8. Culture (changes in the prevailing values, attitudes, beliefs, discourse and patterns of behaviour, whether explicit (e.g. codified in rules or law) or implicit (e.g. rules of thumb or accepted practices) in organisations, social groups or society that deliver benefits to the members of those groups or those they interact with).
9. Other social (benefits to specific social groups or society not covered by other types of impact.)
10. Capacity or preparedness (research that leads to new or enhanced capacity (physical, financial, natural, human resources or social capital and connectivity) that is likely to lead to future benefits, or that makes individuals, groups or organisations more prepared and better able to cope with changes that might otherwise impact negatively on them).

#### Evidence of impact:

Evidence of impact needs to be credible to reviewer. Plug any holes that create doubt in the reviewer's mind that the impact is there. Be specific. Give names, give numbers. e.g. my research picked up by clinical guideline which have been applied in xx countries with xx effect. Provide quotes. Triangulate your evidence i.e. provide different types of evidence. Tips: keep a folder with impact-related information or file in inbox #impact.

#### *High scoring impact statements:*

- Articulate how specific groups have benefited and provide evidence of significance and reach. Instead of words like 'international' use phrases like "in Australia and ..."
- Establish links between research (cause) and impact (effect) convincingly. Use phrases like "cited in (policy documents)", "used to inform" and "resulted in" instead of "a number of" or "impacted on".
- Make narrative easy to understand. Short, less complex sentences to increase reading speed. Avoid unnecessary academic phrasing such as "in relation", "in terms of", "the ways in which"

#### Fast track impact planning:

Need to plan for impact. To "fast track impact", start by thinking about who is your target group that benefits from your research? Which professional groups could you involve? Engage with them? How can you impact this group? How can you measure the impact? Impact assessment needs to be built into all phases of a research study and built into grant budget.

See templates below for impact planning. For more resources see website: [fasttrackimpact.com/resources](http://fasttrackimpact.com/resources)

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Stakeholder and public analysis template:

Name of organisation group or segment of public	Likely interest in your research	What aspects of your research are they likely to be interested in? Identify key messages linked directly to your research for this group?	What level of influence might they have on your capacity to generate impact and/or what level of benefit might they derive from the research?	Comments on level of influence and/or likely benefit (e.g. times or contexts in which they have more/less influence over the outcomes of your research, ways they might block or facilitate your research impact, types of benefit they might derive from the research)	If influence is high but interest is low, how might you motivate greater interest and engagement with the research?

Fast track impact planning template:

Impact goal	Target stakeholders or public	Reason for being interested in the project	Activities to engage this target group	Indicators of successful engagement (and means of measurement)	Indicators of progress towards impact (and means of measurement)	Indicators of progress towards impact (means of measurement)	Risks to activities. (and mitigation)	Risks to impact (and mitigation)	Who is responsible and what resources are needed	Timing