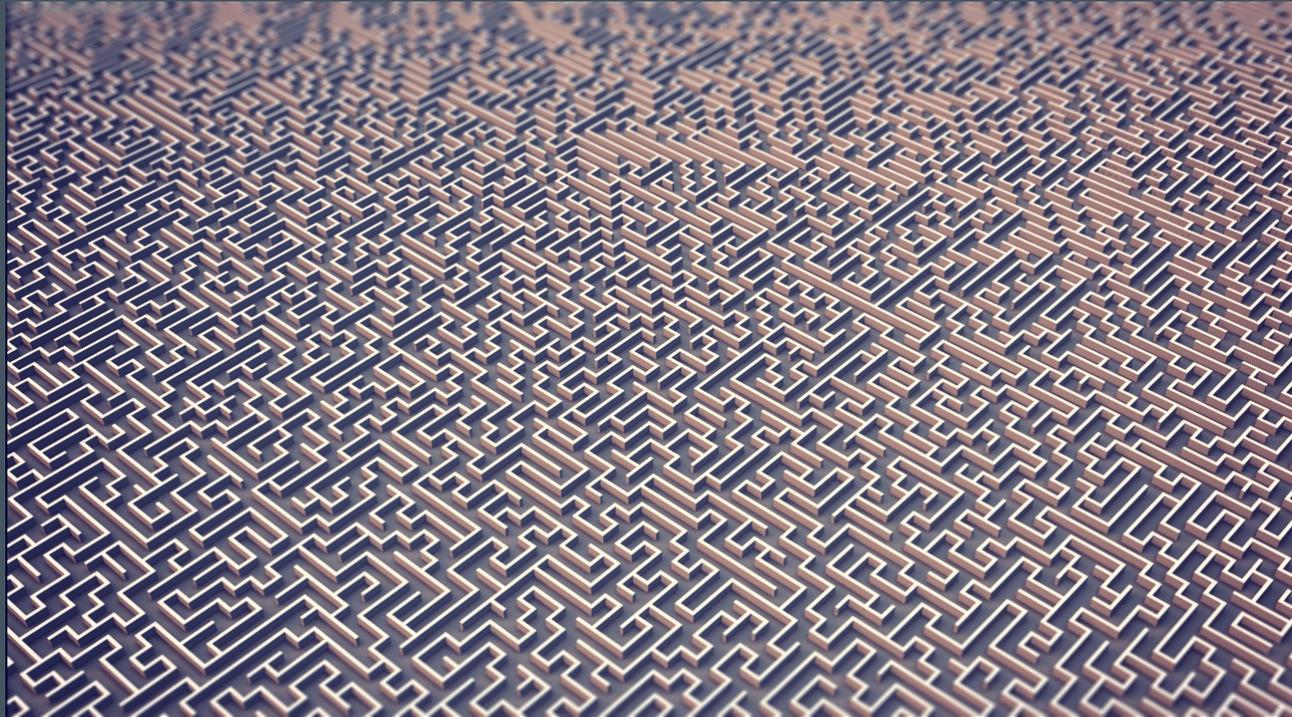


INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH IMPACT: WHAT, WHO, WHY, WHEN, WHERE, HOW?



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INTRODUCTION

- Some definitions
- Developing your impact strategy



RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK (REF) 2014

For the REF purposes, impact was defined by HEFCE as ‘**an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia**’.

Impacts were assessed in terms of **reach** and **significance**:

- Reach is **the extent and breadth of the beneficiaries** of the impact
- Significance is **the degree to which the impact has enabled, enriched, influenced, informed or changed** the products, services, performance, practices, policies or understanding of commerce, industry or other organisations, governments, communities or individuals.

RESEARCH COUNCILS UK (RCUK) DEFINITION

RCUK defines impact as **the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy**

RCUK distinguish between two types of research impact:

Academic impact is the **demonstrable contribution** that excellent social and economic research makes to scientific advances, across and within disciplines, including significant advances in understanding, method, theory and application.

Economic and societal impact is the **demonstrable contribution** that excellent social and economic research makes to society and the economy, of benefit to individuals, organisations and nations by:

- Fostering global economic performance, and specifically the economic competitiveness of the UK
- Increasing the effectiveness of public services and policy
- Enhancing quality of life, health and creative output

CONSULTATION ON THE SECOND RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

- **Academic impact:** the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to academic advances, across and within disciplines, including significant advances in understanding, methods, theory, application and academic practice
- **Wider impact:** an effect on, change to or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment, or quality of life, beyond academia.

RESEARCH IMPACT

“Because we did X, there was a change in Y”: (a) change in policy, (b) increased effectiveness of, (c) improved wellbeing of, (d) reduced costs and/or improved sales ... **demonstrated with evidence.**

Impact includes an effect, change or benefit to:

- (i) The activity, attitude, awareness, behaviour, capacity, opportunity, performance, policy, practice, process or understanding;
- (ii) Of an audience, beneficiary, community, constituency, organisation or individuals;
- (iii) In any geographic location whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.



IMPACT THROUGH THE RESEARCH PROCESS





WHY IS IMPACT IMPORTANT?

Formal & informal drivers:

- Accountability for public investment in research
- Showing the value of research
- Enhancing the uptake and use of research
- Enabling more funds for research (e.g. QR funding)
- Engagement with non-academic partners
- Empowering your research

DEVELOPING YOUR IMPACT STRATEGY

- What is your research about?
- What difference could it contribute towards?
- Who might be interested in your research?
- What's in it for them?
- How will you engage with them and when?
- What do you need resources for and what will it cost?

WHAT?

- Identifying the essence of what your research is about is key to developing an impact strategy
 - What is unique about your research?
 - Why is it important?
- It is imperative that you define how the aim of your research (i.e. your research question) relates to a real world problem
 - What are your research goals?
- This highlights the unmet need and the point at which your research can have an effect - an impact
 - What type of impact do you want to have?

WHAT?

Briefly summarise the benefits you would like your research to generate. Examples could be to:

- Raise awareness among...about...?
- Improve knowledge and understanding among...about...?
- Change the attitudes and perceptions among... about?
- Inform the policy on...?
- Inform guidelines or curriculum?

WHAT?

The following list provides an indication of the potential range of impacts that can be generated from research:

- Enhancing cultural enrichment, quality of life, health and well-being
- Contributing towards evidence based policy-making and influencing public policies and legislation at a local, regional, national and international level
- Shaping and enhancing the effectiveness of public services
- Transforming evidence based policy in practice and influencing and informing practitioners and professional practice
- Improving social welfare, social cohesion and/or national security
- Changing organisational culture and practices

WHO?

To identify the stakeholders that might benefit from or contribute to your research, consider who may be interested, affected by or otherwise care about your findings:

- Whose problems are you trying to solve?
- Whose interests do your research outputs overlap with?
- How are these groups/individuals likely to benefit from or be affected by your research?
- Will they be motivated to engage with you?

WHO?

- General public/community/social enterprise groups
- Government and non-departmental public bodies (ministers, civil servants, policy advisors/makers; regional, national, international)
- Health care providers/agencies
- Charitable sector/NGOs (including patient groups)
- Professional societies
- Private sector/industry
- Media partners (collaboration with the media on feature stories, not press releases)

WHY?

- Why will they benefit/ be influenced by your research?
- Why will they be interested in your research?
- Why is your research important to them?
- Why are you engaging with them?
- Why will your research benefit from this engagement?

HOW?

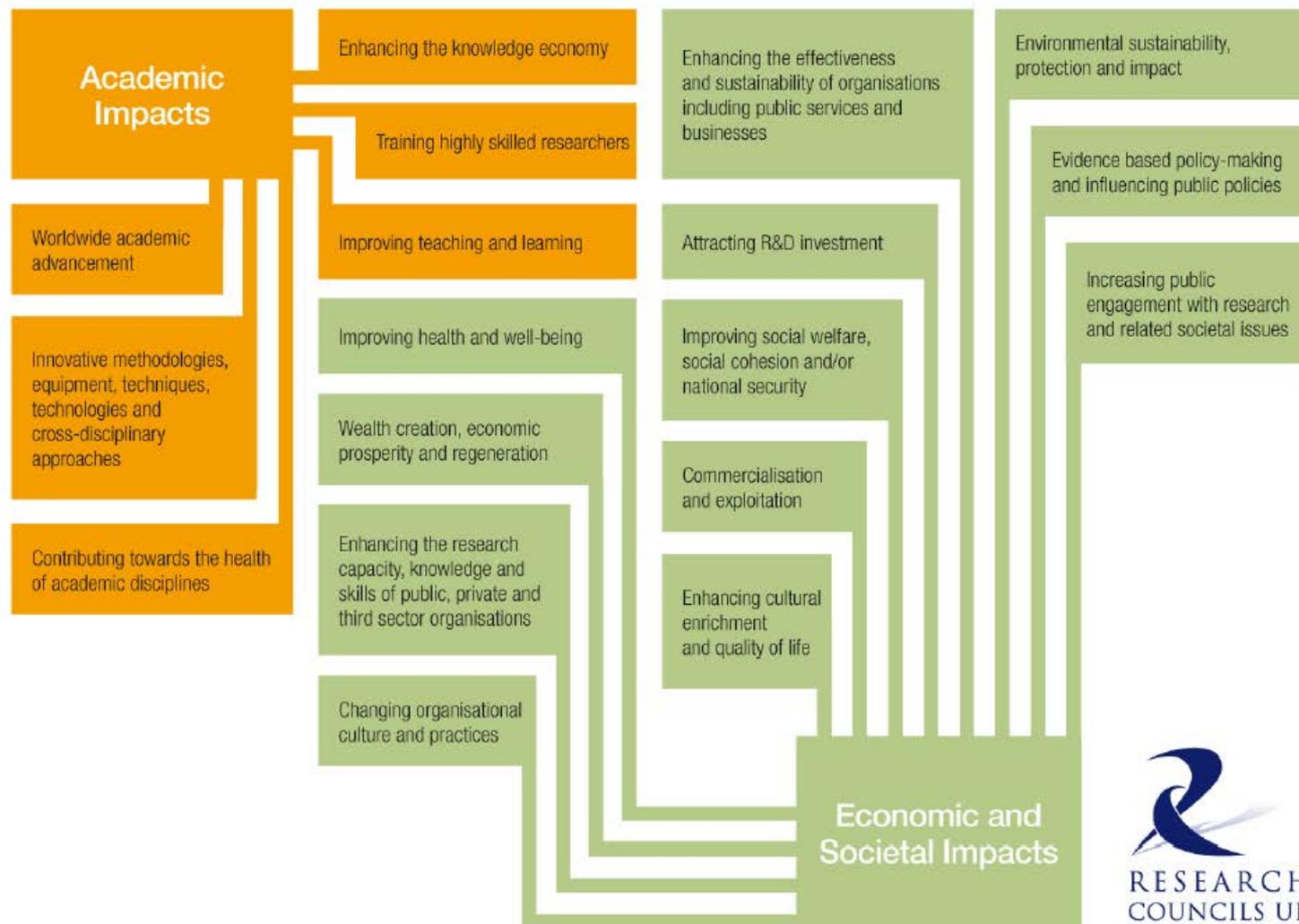
Activities that can be used to exchange knowledge with target audiences and help foster impact include:

- Having an advisory group with key users on board
- Face to face meetings and targeted events involving knowledge users, like public lecturers, public debates, exhibitions, road shows science festivals, university public open days, conferences, seminars and workshops
- Translation of research in an accessible and tailored format for user communities i.e. policy briefings, articles within professional newsletters, journals and magazine, promotional flyers for professional conferences and events; the creation of a website/web-pages, interactive media, podcasts, video reports or webinars
- Easily accessible reports or attractively designed research summaries

HOW?

- Interaction with broadcast media, press briefing/releases, press conferences/interviews, radio/TV appearance, as well as use of digital communication channels such as blogs, Twitter, etc.
- Formal financial and/or in-kind collaboration(s) and partnership (s) to enhance the application and co-production of knowledge, equipment/materials, secondment, training, consultancy, access to facilities and/or other resources, other
- Learning and development opportunities which are project specific and will enhance the economic and societal impact of the research
- Education outreach and associated materials
- Formal people exchange mechanisms such as placements and secondments of research or user community personnel to enhance the application/coproduction of knowledge
- Specialised staff employed to undertake communications and exploitation activities, technical experts to write publications, web pages and user-friendly interfaces

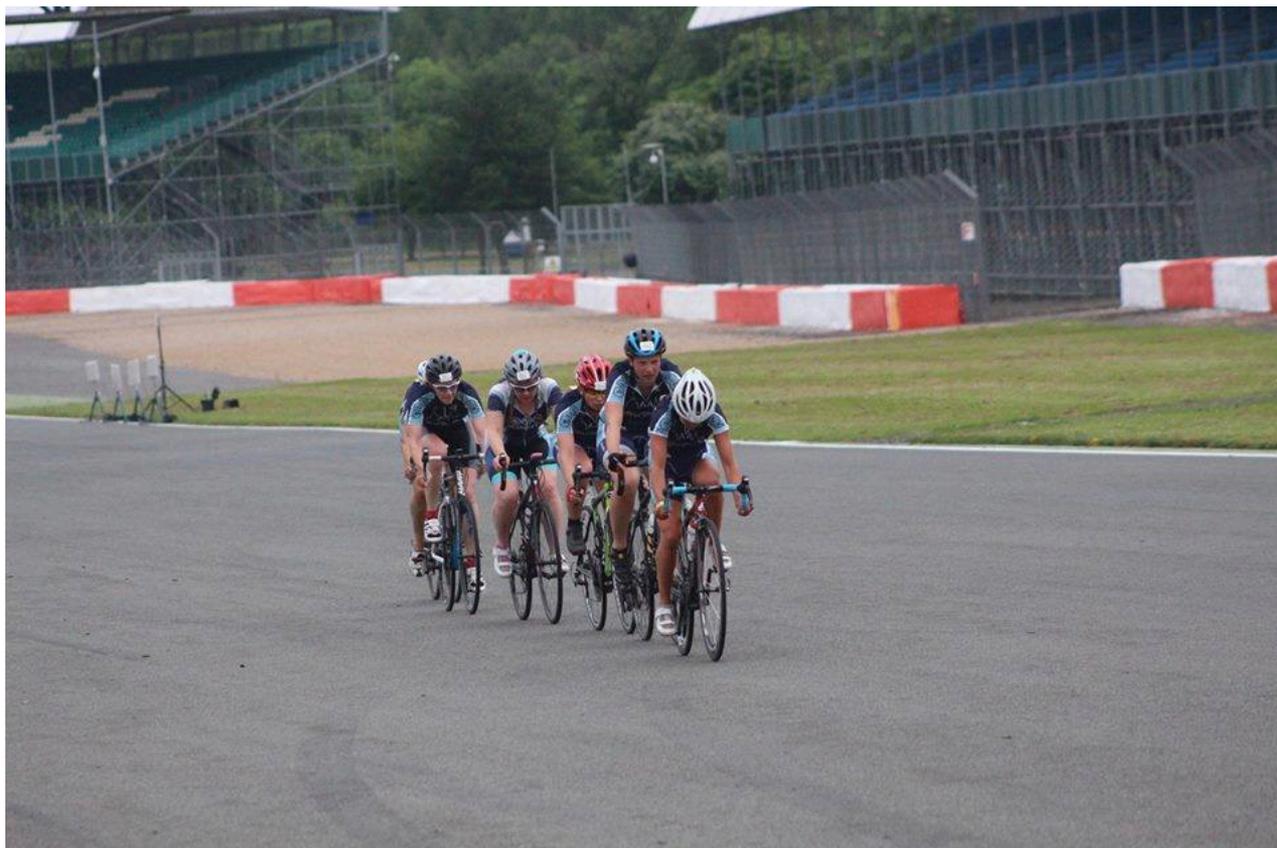
Pathways to Impact



MAXIMISING THE IMPACT OF YOUR RESEARCH

- **Consider impact from the outset**
 - explore who could potentially benefit from your work
 - look at how you can increase the chances of potential beneficiaries benefiting from your work.
- **Establish networks and relationships with research users and involve users at all stages of the research**
 - direct beneficiaries, decision-makers and influencers, partners and collaborators
- **Portfolios of research activity that build up reputations with research users**
- **Retain evidence of when/how/where impact occurs**

WORKING TOGETHER



USEFUL ADDITIONAL INFO

RCUK Websites <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/innovation/impact/>

RCUK Case Studies: Pathways to Impact

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/media/brief/impactcase/>

REF Impact Case Studies <http://impact.ref.ac.uk/CaseStudies/Search1.aspx>

Brookes' REF2014 Case Studies <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/research/ref-2014/case-studies/>

ESRC Impact toolkit <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/impact-toolkit/>

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