

Bridging the gap – Methods to demonstrate impact and value

How to plan for, demonstrate and communicate real-world impacts to funders

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There's often a gap between research objectives and expectations for

achieving demonstrable impact for people and the environment. A practical approach to planning for, and demonstrating impact, helps bridge the gap and communicate the real-world impacts that funders want to see.

It's not rocket science (even if it is)

There is no project that is too complex for its intended impact to be understood and communicated clearly. In fact, the more complex a project may be, the more important it is to communicate it clearly to a diverse audience, including funders.

The importance of communications and story-telling in the funder landscape cannot be understated. All funders want value-for-money, and they want to see the impact of their contributions.

Good communications that demonstrate impact can greatly enhance the funding potential of a project, increasing the likelihood of impact through the application phase.

Techniques such as plain English, video and digital communications, social media engagement, case studies and impact stories help demystify jargon,

Monitoring & Evaluation - Data Collection

All projects need data to effectively tell the story of success, demonstrate and communicate impact. M&E systems help plan and undertake data collection at all steps along the project pathway. M&E systems enable regular monitoring, adaptive program management, and support the demonstration and evaluation of impact.

M&E systems are best when they are simple and applicable by all people involved in the project, and collect quantitative and qualitative information. Data collection doesn't need to be complex and can be as simple as a conversation, a targeted question or a short survey.

Communicating Impact

Communications planning starts with your audience - if your audience is your funder, what are their objectives? What do they want to hear? A simple stakeholder analysis can help unpack their interests, and guide your communications.

improve understanding and effectively communicate impact to a broader audience.

Planning and Measuring Impact

Practical program planning and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools can be applied to any project, no matter how complex. An Impact Pathway, Program Logic or Theory of Change (different names for the same thing) help logically plan the pathways to impact (i.e. how activities and outputs, lead to short-term, then long-term goals). They help highlight assumptions, outline risks and guide the collection of data and stories along the pathway to demonstrate the real-world, tangible benefits of a project.

RTICIPATION: Who we nee	d to reach across the various parts of the	pathway?			
rtner Governments; DFAT; RO; IPPIN Steering Committee; b partners; Hub Advisory pup	Ministries of Education, Culture, Research & Technology, Environment; DFAT; CSIRO; NPAP; Hub Advisory Group; Academia; WEF; NPAP; Alliance to End Plastic Waste; Industry (Plastics, Marine. Fishing, etc.); Investors	Ministries of Education, Culture, Research & Technology, Environment; DFAT; CSIRO; NPAP; Hub Advisory Group; Academia; WEF; NPAP; Alliance to End Plastic Waste; Industry (Plastics, Marine. Fishing, etc.); Investors	Partner governments (local, provincial, national; Australian); DFAT; CSIRO; Academic/Research Partners; SMEs; Industry (plastic Marine, Fishing, etc.); Kopernik; Alliance to End Plastic Waste; Consumers/general public	, Government; Industry (Plastics, marine, Fishing, etc); General public	
Years 2021 – 2024			Years 2023 – 2032		
NPUTS What we invest	ACTIVITIES What we do		DUTCOMES The uptake, adoption or consumption of our work	IMPACTS Benefits to eco, environ, soc	
 Curding/Resourcing CSIRO strategic Australian government grant (DFAT) Partner government funding Corporations/industry Existing capabilities, governance, infrastructure CSIRO capability in science & science diplomacy Partner capability & expertise IPPIN Steering Committee Advisory Group to guide each Hub Physical and virtual research labs and collaboration spaces and tools 	 Network Convening of network of partners (internal and external) of program participants, sponsors/mentors/ investors for co-design and program implementation Design and implementation of blueprint, business model and governance arrangements Develop & implement partnering & engagement models & strategy Comms approach tailored to each stakeholder group Advocacy of IPPIN with high-level stakeholders (reputation, \$) Coordination of Hub operations Refinement and implementation of Entrepreneurship program (Incubate, Accelerate, Grow programs) Baseline and repeat survey reports for strategic locations Develop design principles for Hub activities that reflect GESDI Science & technology innovation, i.e. plastics alternatives & substitutes, monitoring and tracking, waste & waste systems innovation Monitoring, evaluation & learning (MEL) Develop & implement IPPIN MEL framework including relevant reporting mechanisms/artefacts for key stakeholders 	 [KPI 1] Network model Program structure Operating model Link with established platforms and partnerships (e.g., NPAP) Partnerships & engagement [KPI 2] [KPI 3 shared] Communication & Engagement Strategy (incl. associated operational plans & collateral) Best-practice guidance for partnering and engagement with underrepresented communities from project/program design to implementation & value creation Pathways/hand-offs and partnerships for promising technologies that are not suitable for Hub Country Hubs created Hubs created to support ventures [KPI 4] and deep tech solutions e.g. New processes and technologies for plastics alternatives, substitutes, waste Baseline studies and monitoring systems Decision-making assistance tools New capacity and capabilities Technical skills development 	 Hort Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes Cong Term Outcomes Policy/strategy change Knowledge sharing in the network supporting policy development and implementation and systemic change Capacity & capability change (EOPO) Network is a key partner working in collaboration and synergy with ecosystem of innovators in region [KPI 6 shared] [KPI 9] Supply chains are being ordination and synergy with ecosystem of innovators in region [KPI 6 shared] [KPI 9] Supply chains are being ordination and synergy with ecosystem of innovators in region [KPI 6 shared] [KPI 9] Supply chains are being ordination (KPI 8) Project participants run baseline surveys for plastic wastage [KPI 10] Under-represented communities are induded, sharing knowledge and decision- making when developing solutions [KPI 8] Sulding addressed in the broader innovation ecosystem and needs are being addressed in the broader innovation ecosystem around plastics Social acceptance pathway issights and knowledge/ case studies with broader public [KPI 11] The public more broadly gains an understanding about plastics outoon and opportunities The public more broadly gains an understanding about plastics outoon, risks, and opportunities 	 Lower carbon footprint of plastics industry Indirect benefits, incl. improved waste management leading to improved urban sanitation Social Sovereign innovation capacity (i.e., capital & skills, infrastructure) for future innovation Partner governments improve governance of R&D funding and have dedicated funding for R&D Regional cooperation and collaboration is enhanced Health and wellbeing benefits resulting from a reduction in plastic consumption and waste 	
		successes	÷		

Communications should show how your project impacted people or the environment in a tangible way. Stories from the voices of those most impacted are the most powerful.

Communications methods should be succinct and direct – no one likes a 50+ page report. Digital tools like video, social media, case studies and impact stories are effective, time-efficient ways to share the impact of a project in the modern attention landscape.



CO-DESIGN AND PLACEMAKING IRT AGED CARE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, PROGRAM DESIGN 2018-2021

HE CHALLENGE

IRT (formerly Illawarra Retirement Trust) is an aged care provider that has been building and managing seniors living facilities for more than 50 years. Their aim is to create thriving seniors' communities for the future well-being of Australia's aging population. As part of their commitment to innovation and continual business improvement, in 2019-20 IRT engaged Strategic Development Group to establish a co-design process that would engage local communities and prospective buyers. The co-design process aimed to create positive dialogue in the community and to gather insights to ensure IRT is designing for the future and establishing facilities that are innovative and to for purpose.

THE SOLUTION

Strategic Development Group, in close partnership with IRT, developed a tailored co-design process to bring together prospective customers and the local community to shape the future of seniors living. The co-design process was conducted at two levels:

Nationally through a quantitative online survey – to gather insights into big picture themes on buyer preferences from community members, industry employees and current seniors living residents





Locally (site-speci c) - to test and validate the big picture ndings through qualitative and quantitative activities including local community consultations, interviews, pop-ups, and workshops.

This process enabled the high-level quantitative ndings to be validated for each site in the development pipeline, and site-specic c design aspects to be tested. Subsequently (2021) we were engaged to run online workshops to test the plans for the Towradgi site, and to help run a drop-in session prior to DA submission.

THE OUTCOME

The co-design process has enabled IRT to validate and re-align their understanding of future buyer preferences and local needs. It has also helped drive a customer-centric culture within IRT. The consolidated ndings for the rst site have been used to inform the species of the design brief and Development Application prior to its submission for Council approval.

Participants involved in the consultative process were highly engaged, expressing it was "a great opportunity to provide input". They were pleased to see IRT interested in their thoughts. There is increased awareness of IRT and their plans for the site which is expected to lead to increased demand for the new village. Participants appreciated "having specialists involved", and they felt IRT was "very responsive to their ideas".

Figure 2 & 3: IRT Co-design Case Study and Ginninderry Display video, Strategic Development Group

strategic development group

Figure 4: https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/climate-change/supporting-indo-pacific-tackle-climate-change/scitech4climate-harnessing-science-and-technology-support-climate-resilience-indo-pacific

Figure 1: Impact Pathway for CSIRO Indo-Pacific Plastics Innovation Network (IPPIN) project, funded by DFAT.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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Strategic Development Group pays respect to the Traditional Custodians of the land, and their Elders past, present and future.

