



r4d.ch - Guidelines for the Application and Communication Strategy

The *application of the research* results into policy and practice and the *communication to stakeholders* are considered as an integral part of the research activities. Therefore, the research proposal must include a strategy for application and communication to stakeholders which is linked to the project's pathways to impact.

Application can be different in nature. Application can, for instance, imply optimizing interventions at the systems level; policy change or prioritization; translating evidence into effective policies; or translating policy into effective practice.

Application or getting research into practice and policy is a difficult endeavor. It takes place in a complex system of interactions between researchers and potential users. It is an iterative and on-going process and therefore implies a comprehensive understanding of the context in which research outcomes may be utilized, and an understanding of who will or might ultimately use the results. An *application strategy* needs to be developed explaining how the knowledge exchange with the relevant stakeholders at relevant level is to take place throughout the project cycle and ultimately how this knowledge is translated into policy and practice. Although not all research can or will be immediately applied, the strategy should describe in detail specific activities, research outputs, products, or potential deliverables that have great potential to be relevant and useful for practice and policy. It is crucial to identify the most appropriate format for outputs and deliverables in function of the main target groups.

Researchers will need to consider the scalability of their research findings. Researchers will be expected to demonstrate that their projects will have the potential to generate benefits that go beyond the scale or location at which they are operating either through extension to other locations or shifting to other scales. Thus, the focus should be on products that are generic enough to be useful /relevant (also) beyond a specific context, and have a high potential for scaling-up (at different societal levels) and replication (in different comparable contexts).

From a users' perspective promising research outputs or deliverables could take the form of policy options, technical guides, curricular modules, check lists, handbooks, tool boxes, glossaries, and the like.

A proactive *communication strategy* will be essential for all projects. Researchers should consider a range of communication channels linked to their project's pathways to impact to ensure that their research makes a significant contribution to delivery against the overarching goals. Communication activities – such as workshops, the web, policy briefs, film, podcast, think pieces, success stories, – provide tools or channels through which to influence, inform or build relationships with key stakeholders.

The following questions should be considered in your strategy for application and communication to stakeholders:

- Which are the interests and needs of different target groups?
- Which are the appropriate mechanisms and adequate activities to ensure an effective exchange and dissemination of knowledge/research results with the relevant key stakeholders?
- What will be done to ensure that potential beneficiaries have the opportunity to engage with this research?
- Which are suitable incentives for users to adopt the research results?