

Impacts arising from public engagement activity

77. Engaging the public with research is an activity that may lead to impact. Sub-panels will welcome case studies that include impact achieved in this way, either as the main impact described or as one facet of a wider range of impacts.

78. Public engagement is a very broad area, not all of which is underpinned by research. Case studies which include impacts that derive from engaging the public with research must:

- a. At least in part, be based on specific research or a body of research carried out in the submitted unit, and explain clearly which particular aspects of the research underpinned the engagement activity and contributed to the impact claimed.
- b. Include evidence of the reach of the impact. This should extend beyond simply providing the numbers of people engaged and may also, for example, include:
 - information about the types of audience
 - whether there was secondary reach, for example from follow-up activity or media coverage
 - other quantitative indicators such as evidence of sales, downloads of linked resources, and/or access to web content.
- c. Include evidence of the significance of the impact. This should include a description of the social, cultural or other significance of the research insights with which the public have engaged. Examples of the evidence that might be provided for this include:
 - evaluation data
 - user feedback or testimony
 - critical external reviews of the engagement activity
 - evidence of third party involvement, for example how collaborators have modified their practices, contributions (financial or in-kind) by third parties to enhance services or support for the public, or evidence of funds from third parties to enhance or extend the engagement activity
 - evidence of sustainability, through, for example, a sustained or ongoing engagement with a group, a significant increase in participation in events or programmes, continuing sales, downloads, or use of resources.

Case studies: evidence of impact

79. Each case study must provide a clear and coherent narrative that includes an account of who or what constituency, group, sector, organisation and so on, has benefited, been influenced, or acted upon. Evidence appropriate to the type(s) of impact described should be provided to support the claims made of the nature and extent of the impact, in terms of its reach and significance.

80. Evidence may take many different forms depending on type of impact(s) reported. Wherever possible, quantitative indicators should be included. Sources that could verify key evidence and indicators provided in the case study should be included in section 5 of the impact case study template.

81. The main panel recognises that some of the evidence in case studies may be of a confidential or sensitive nature. The arrangements for submitting and assessing case studies that include such material are set out in Part 1, paragraphs 58-59.

82. The examples in Table B2 provide a guide to potential types of evidence or indicators that may be most relevant to each of the types of impact described in Table B1. However, HEIs should note that:

- a. This is not intended to be exhaustive.
- b. Some indicators may be relevant to more than one type of impact.
- c. Sub-panels will consider any appropriate evidence that is verifiable.
- d. Sub-panels recognise the varying degrees to which evidence and indicator information may be available to HEIs.

Table B2 Examples of evidence and indicators of impact

Economic impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business performance measures, for example, sales, turnover, profits or employment associated with new or improved products, processes or services.• Licences awarded and brought to market.• Jobs created or protected.• Investment funding raised from UK and/or non-UK agencies (venture capital/Business Angel, and so on) for start-up businesses and new activities of existing businesses.• Evidence of critical impact on particular projects, products and processes confirmed by independent authoritative evidence, which should be financial where possible.• Priority shifts in expenditure profiles or quantifiable reallocation of corporate, non-profit or public budgets.
Impacts on public policy and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documented evidence of policy debate (for example, in Parliament, the media, material produced by NGOs).• Documented evidence of changes to public policy/legislation/regulations/guidelines.• Measures of improved public services, including, where appropriate, quantitative information; such information may relate for example to the quality, accessibility or cost-effectiveness of public services.• Documented evidence of changes to international development policies.• Measures of improved international welfare or inclusion.
Impacts on society, culture and creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visitor or audience numbers and feedback.• Critical reviews in the media and/or other professional publications.• Evidence of public debate in the media or other fora.• Evidence of sustained and ongoing engagement with a group.• Measures of increased attainment and/or measures of improved engagement with science in non-HE education.
Health impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence from clinical trials.• Measures of improved patient outcomes, public health or health services.• Documented changes to clinical guidelines.• Evidence of take-up and use of new or improved products and processes that improve quality of life in developing countries.
Impacts on practitioners and professional services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traceable reference to inclusion of research in national or international industry standards or authoritative guidance.• Traceable references by practitioners to research papers that describe their use and the impact of the research.• New or modified professional standards and codes of practice.• New or modified technical standards or protocols.• Documented changes in knowledge, capability or behaviours of individuals benefiting from training.

Table B2 Examples of evidence and indicators of impact continued

Impacts on the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sales of new products or improvements in existing products that bring quantifiable environmental benefits.• Traceable impacts on particular projects or processes which bring environmental benefits.• Evidence of generic environmental impact across a sector, confirmed by independent authoritative evidence.• Documented case-specific improvements to environment-related issues.• Traceable reference to inclusion of research into government policy papers, legislation and industry guidance.• Traceable reference to impact of research in planning decision outcomes.• Policy documentation.
----------------------------	--

Case studies: underpinning research

83. As described in the impact case study template (see the 'guidance on submissions', Annex G) HEIs should provide in section 3 up to six key references to research produced by the submitting unit in the period 1 January 1993 to 31 December 2013 that underpins the impact described in the case study. A case study will be eligible for assessment only if the sub-panel is satisfied that the underpinning research is predominantly of at least two star quality.

84. Case studies may reference any type of output that is the product of research. HEIs should identify up to three of these references that best indicate the quality of the underpinning research. Based on the information submitted, the sub-panels will use their expert judgement to determine in how much detail they need to review the underpinning research in order to be assured that the quality threshold has been met.

85. Provided the sub-panel is satisfied that the quality threshold has been met, the quality of the underpinning research will not be taken into consideration as part of the assessment of the reach and significance of the claimed impact.

86. Underpinning research referenced in a case study may also be included in a submission as an output (listed in REF2), without disadvantage. In these situations, the assessment of the impact case study will have no bearing on the assessment of the quality of the output. The assessment of the quality of the output may inform the assessment of the case study, only in terms of assuring the threshold for underpinning research quality.

Impact template

87. The requirement to submit an impact template is described in 'guidance on submissions' (paragraphs 149-155), and the generic template is at Annex B of this document. The sub-panels request the following information in each section a-d of the template. Where possible, relevant illustrative examples with traceable references should be given, rather than broad general statements. The information submitted under headings a and d will be considered as contextual information for the sub-panels in assessing the case studies, and will not be assessed in forming the impact sub-profiles.

a. **Context:**

- Describe the main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries or audiences for the unit's research.
- Describe the main types of impact specifically relevant to the unit's research, and how these relate to the range of research activity or research groups in the unit.

b. **Approach to impact:** Describe the unit's approach to its interaction with non-academic users, beneficiaries or audiences and to achieving impacts from its research, during the period 2008-2013. This could include details of, for example:

- How staff in the unit interacted with, engaged with or developed relationships with key users, beneficiaries or audiences to develop impact from the research carried out in the unit⁸.

⁸ Note that within the environment template, submissions should explain research collaborations with users, and how their relationships/interactions inform the development of the unit's research activity/strategy.