



### **WHY DO I NEED THIS?**

Articulating the impact of your work is increasingly important for securing funding, academic recognition, and demonstrating the real-world value of your research endeavours.

### **IMPACT CENTRE**

Co-created by the Science in Society unit, in consultation with the research divisions.



**HSRC**  
Human Sciences  
Research Council

# **IMPACT PLANNING TEMPLATE**

Relevance • Visibility • Impact

## What is an Impact Planning Template

A research impact planning template is a structured framework or guideline used to outline and assess the impact of your research project or study. It typically includes specific sections or categories to help you systematically analyse and communicate the broader implications and outcomes of your work.

The template aids you in identifying, measuring, and articulating the impact of your work, which is increasingly important for securing funding, academic recognition, and demonstrating the real-world value of research endeavours. The structure and specific elements may vary, based on the funding body, research field or discipline, the nature of the research or the type of impact (e.g. academic, societal, or policy change impact).

## Why is it useful?

These templates help you define: **objectives and context** by describing the aims of the research and the larger context in which it operates; **methodology and findings**; **impact assessment** of the research on different stakeholders, industries, policies, or societal aspects. They provide **pathways to impact** by outlining the channels or routes through which the research is expected to or has made an impact; **evidence of impact** that demonstrates the research's influence or contribution; and **lessons learned** by helping you reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the research process and outcomes.

## Need more background?

An Impact Planning Template is a structured method of linking impact goals to publics/stakeholders, research findings and pathways to impact. If you find it challenging to start with impact goals, try identifying your publics/stakeholders and what they might be interested in, and then work back from there to your goals.



## Examples of Impact Planning Template using HSRC projects

| Impact goal   | Target stakeholders or publics   | Reasons 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 [means of measurement]                           | Risks to activities [and mitigation]  | Risks to impact [and mitigation]  | Who is responsible and what resources are needed?           | Timing                            |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| Provides trend achievement measures in Mathematics and Science for Gr 5 and 8 (TIMMS)   | International collaborators<br>National DBE<br>Schools<br>Teachers<br>Learners<br>Fieldworkers             | Contributes towards educational outcomes of the country   | Face-to-face meetings<br>Radio/TV interviews<br>Policy dialogues<br>Seminars<br>Zoom/team meetings<br>Seminal papers | Dissemination and engagement metrics, number of meetings, radio/TV presentations, seminars. | Draft policies<br>Interventions/programs<br>Utilising/where research outputs are cited | Despite good strong evidence to provide policy and programmes directions, evidence not being used. Political influences | Lack of commitment from key players (DBE, teacher unions etc) to change   | HSRC-funding and data                                       | Every two years                   |
| Provide strategic information on national and sub-national progress towards control of the HIV epidemic in South Africa. (SABSSM) | CDC<br>NDoH<br>MRC<br>UCT<br>Lab<br>Traditional leaders<br>Fieldworkers<br>Participants                    | Contribute towards production of data and strategic information needed for tracking and planning programmes | Policy dialogues<br>Seminars<br>Face-to-face meetings<br>Radio/TV interviews<br>Zoom/team meetings                   | Dissemination and engagement metrics, number of meetings, radio/TV presentations, seminars. | Draft policies<br>Interventions/programs<br>Utilising/where research outputs are cited | Timeliness of produced information products to inform policy and programming  | Information products not being used to inform policies and/or programming | CDC-funding<br>NDoH-Policy developers/programs<br>HSRC-Data | Series of surveys every 4/5 years |
| To provide evidence on food security in South Africa<br><br>(FOOD SECURITY)   | Dept. of Agriculture and Rural Development<br>Traditional leaders<br>SAPS<br>Fieldworkers<br>SA households | Provide awareness about the state of food security/insecurity in the country.                               | Face-to-face meetings<br>Radio interviews<br>Policy dialogues<br>Seminars<br>Zoom/team meetings                      | Collected data<br>Smooth run project  | Research dissemination<br>Draft policies<br>Interventions/programs                     | Natural –rain<br>Strikes within communities   | Depletion of funds  | Dept. of Agric-funding<br>HSRC-data                         | Every 5 years                     |

## **Establish and explain your goals. WHY?**

- Identify people involved (stakeholders, partners and audiences). WHO?
- The role each will play in achieving the goals. HOW?
- The necessary actions for delivering those goals. WHAT?