

## RTAC Webinar #1 Transcript

### A Vital Resource: Exploring USAID's Research Translation Toolkit

February 9, 2023

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Julie MacCartee: Welcome, everyone. My name is Julie MacCartee and I'm a program officer with the Research Division within the Innovation Technology and Research Hub at the U.S. Agency for International Development, or USAID.

As I mentioned before, those of you have just joined, please feel free to also introduce yourselves in the chat. We'd love to know where you're joining from, and what interested you in the webinar today. We're delighted to have you joining us today for the first in a four-part webinar series on how to Use USAID's Research Translation Toolkit to increase the reach and impact of your research.

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Julie MacCartee: The Research Translation Toolkit was developed under USAID's Research Technical Assistance Center, also known as RTAC. So, you might hear the acronym RTAC a few times during this webinar. RTAC supports USAID missions, bureaus and independent offices, to make evidence-based decisions. The project is funded by USAID and led by NORC at the University of Chicago with PRB as a core partner.

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Julie MacCartee: Today's webinar will offer a broad overview of the toolkit. We'll show how its three sections can be used together to help you package research backed recommendations into accessible formats that can easily be used by your target audiences to improve policies, programs, and practices.

For your reference, we will share a link to the research translation toolkit itself in the chat box, and, of course, we'll share that multiple times and make sure that you have access to it in our post event resources.

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Julie MacCartee: We're also offering three subsequent webinars to go into greater depth on each of the three sections. We'll share more information on those webinars at the end of today's session. You're welcome to just attend this webinar if it meets your needs. But the next three will give a chance to unpack your questions about each section of the toolkit.

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Julie MacCartee: If you are a USAID staff member attending today, we hope you look for ways to use this toolkit as you design and support projects that focus on research and or evidence use, and we also encourage you to share the toolkit or the recording of this webinar with your implementing partners. If you yourself, are a research scientist or other development practitioner, we hope you will use these tools to increase the impact of your work.

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Julie MacCartee: Before we get started, just a couple of logistical points. Since there are a lot of people here. We have turned off your videos and microphones, but we will be using and monitoring the chat box throughout the webinar. And, as I said before, we invite you to introduce yourselves. Use the chat box as you wish. If you have a question during the webinar, however, we encourage you to use Zoom's Q&A feature which, for me, is at the bottom of my screen, to help us track and answer your questions. We'll keep an eye on the chat box, but it would really help us if you would put your kind of concrete questions about the toolkit into the Q&A feature.

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Julie MacCartee: All right. And lastly, I wanted to make sure that I give a shout out to my colleague, Celia Laskowski, who is on the webinar today, who played a really important role in development of the toolkit. She is with the USAID Research Division, as well, and she'll be in the chat box kind of engaging with you all and helping answer questions also. Thanks for saying "hello," Celia.

All right enough from me.

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Julie MacCartee: So, to get it start to get us under way. I would like to extend a warm welcome to Emmanuella Delva, who will share her perspective on the importance of research translation, and why USAID decided to invest in this toolkit.

Emmanuella is the deputy director for research policy in the Research Division at USAID, as well as the acting managing director of the division. The research division lies within the larger Innovation Technology and Research Hub within the Bureau for Development, Democracy and Innovation. USAID is like an onion. Many layers.

She has been with USAID for almost 12 years, having first joined as an American Association for the Advancement of Science or AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellow in 2011. She holds a PhD. in biological and biomedical sciences from Emory University and is no stranger to the processes of developing and implementing research programs and disseminating the results. So, Emmanuella, I will gladly pass the microphone to you.

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Emmanuella Delva: Great. Thank you so much. Thank you, Julie, Celia, and the entire team for the opportunity to provide brief remarks and for putting together what I'm sure will be a very informative and fruitful series of webinars to highlight the importance of research translation in support of international development.

So, what drew me to a career in science policy was my love for doing research, and at the expense of sounding cheesy, to make the world a better place. And part of making the world a better place, includes utilizing and improving interventions to address key development challenges across all of the technical sectors in which USAID works.

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Emmanuella Delva: The Research Division in USAID's Innovation, Technology and Research Hub serves to manage programs, promote partnerships and develop and implement policies to support the advancement of both the generation and translation of the amazing data and research findings that come from the higher education community, as well as our agency colleagues. And planning for research utilization allows us to keep our eyes on the prize from as close to the beginning of a research activity as possible, to maximize our ability to identify promising development solutions and per in an information for key stakeholders.

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Emmanuella Delva: Which brings us to the importance of developing this Research Translation Toolkit under RTAC. For the last four plus years, USAID has been fortunate to work with NORC and PRB as they have provided guidance on planning for research uptake.

However, there is only so much the RTAC staff can do, and unfortunately, they cannot work with every research team in the agency. But through the use of this Research Translation Toolkit, every research team now can have the tools necessary to ensure that data and evidence that we generate are put to the best use possible. Excuse me.

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Emmanuella Delva: You will learn over the next several weeks about the key components of the toolkit designed to be utilized at any portion at any point—excuse me—of your research. It is a resource that can be used for currently active USAID supported projects as well as before the start of a research activity. Or after the research has been completed.

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Emmanuella Delva: As we all know, a positive change often starts with decisionmakers, key individuals who work within government and other organizations and can use research evidence to improve programs and find to fine-tune policies. And through the use of this toolkit, researchers and research teams can identify and engage with these important stakeholders through the development of communication products, key stakeholder analyses, and research-to-action plans.

So, with that I will stop there. Thank you again for the opportunity to be here today, and I will hand the mic over back to Julie.

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Julie MacCartee: Thank you so much, Emmanuella. I'll now turn things over to Tess McCloud from PRB to lead us through a quick exercise to frame where we're all coming from before we move on to the main part of this webinar.

Tess is a senior policy adviser at PRB in international programs, where she works on advocacy for multi sectoral development initiatives that address the links between population, health, and the environment. She supports researchers to develop plans, to translate their research findings into action. I'll pass it to you.

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Tess McCloud: Thank you, Julie.

Now we want to take a moment to hear from you all about what factors influence, research, uptake, and by research uptake, we mean people who do not actually conduct the research are now using the evidence that you've produced to inform their decisions. You might have also heard this referred to as research, utilization, or research to practice.

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Tess McCloud: So, we're sharing a link in the chat that you can use to respond to this question on the screen. All of your answers will contribute to a word cloud. The bigger and bolder words that will come through are those that are mentioned the most often. This will help us get a sense of the common challenges that are faced among today's participants. In doing this, since you're limited to one word, we also welcome you to elaborate on your responses in the chat box, if you'd like to.

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Tess McLoud: So, we'll get some time now to put a Mentimeter up on the screen. You can look in the chat to get the link and submit an answer to which factors influence research uptake. I see some answers coming through already – fantastic!

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Tess McLoud: So, as you submit, answers will come across on the screen. Here, again, the larger words are those that are submitted most often so might be the most pertinent for the most number of people. I'm seeing "relevance." So, having research results that are relevant to the needs of your stakeholders can help them be utilized. "Understanding," "need," "time."

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Tess McLoud: "Plain language" – that's a good one. "Ownership." Absolutely. "Practicality" and "engagement." So, go ahead and submit your answers. If you would like to add something else besides what you can put into the multi answer box, you're welcome to add it into the chat.

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Tess McLoud: Quite a number of responses coming through. This is fantastic! I think all of these are certainly factors that we're going to touch on, and that are relevant to influence research uptake. "Quality," "clarity," "practicality." Okay, fantastic.

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Tess McLoud: That was just an exercise to get us warmed up and thinking a little bit today about research uptake and what it takes to get your research utilized. Christine, I think we can move on. All right. Fantastic! Yes, you all identified many important factors that influence whether and to what degree research findings are seen and used by stakeholders to inform policies, programs, and practices. In essence, these factors influence the degree to which research findings are translated, to become more accessible to a wider audience than the scientific research community.

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Tess McLoud: Now we'll walk you through the ways in which the toolkit can be used to address those factors. The Research Translation Toolkit is a comprehensive standalone resource that can be used by anyone who wants to bridge the gap between research production and research utilization.

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Tess McCloud: Each section includes exercises, fillable forms, and templates to help you apply the information in the toolkit to your own work in order to influence decisions and achieve development impact. The toolkit is divided into three sections: stakeholder analysis, communication products, and research-to-action or R2A plan. Working together, these three sections can help you craft strategies and messages to influence decisions and achieve development impact more effectively throughout the research process.

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Tess McCloud: You can use the toolkit no matter where you are in your research process. While we recommend using the entire toolkit throughout the research process, it will be most effective if it is used on multiple points. As you can see from this graphic, there are certain sections of the toolkit that are most suited to each phase of the research process. Using specific toolkit sections at critical points in the research process will allow you to get the most impact from the toolkit.

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Tess McCloud: Together, we'll walk through each section and discuss when it is best to use and why. Remember, the research process is cyclical, so these stages, and the various toolkit sections, may be revisited throughout the life of your research project. However, before we dive into each of the three toolkit sections, we wanted to share examples of a few real research teams that have used the processes provided in the toolkit to develop their own stakeholder analysis, communication products, and research-to-action plan as they move throughout the research process.

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Tess McCloud: A research team at the Institut Pasteur de Tunis that was working on cutaneous leishmaniasis, a skin infection transmitted by sand flies, conducted a stakeholder analysis to help them develop a research-to-action plan. First, they brainstormed and identified an initial set of 20 stakeholders, they thought could help them achieve their research utilization goals. That initial list consisted of a diverse group of individuals from government offices, multilateral organizations, foundations, universities, hospitals, and businesses who were operating at various spheres of influence, ranging from subnational to global levels.

Next, they systematically considered stakeholders level of influence over the research topic to determine which stakeholders should be prioritized for engagement. Stakeholders with a high level of influence were generally prioritized over others.

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Tess McCloud: A second example shows how a research team used the processes outlined in the communication products section of the toolkit to develop products to share their findings and recommendations. A research team in the Philippines analyzed data that confirmed that contact tracing for childhood tuberculosis cases was not consistently performed to standard. The research identified barriers to better contact tracing. The team felt an urgency to share their findings, so health care workers could identify a much larger number of affected children than they were identifying under the current approach. The team wanted to reach decision-makers at both the national and subnational levels.

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Tess McCloud: They also wanted to provide specific recommended actions to the three northern Philippine provinces in which they conducted their research. They recommended that national, regional and local governments establish guidance on contact tracing and provide health care workers with the resources and tools to improve contact tracing. Based on the information they received through interviews about stakeholders' communication preferences in the health sector, the team decided to develop a factsheet tailored for national, regional and local decision makers with photos and relevant data findings from their research.

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Tess McCloud: Finally, a research team at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute designed and evaluated a clean energy cooling system for low-income farmers. During a research translation workshop, the research team set R2A goals focused on reaching national and subnational stakeholders. To ensure farmer groups have access to financing for the cooling system. The team identified several immediate actionable next steps to work towards these goals, including drafting technical guidelines to help farmers obtain funding from the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund, meeting with decision makers responsible for setting implementation guidelines based on policy decisions in agriculture and banking, and conducting demonstrations of the cold storage structure for farmers. The team focused on influential stakeholders who could address the problem of farmers lack of access to affordable cold storage which had resulted in wasted food.

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Tess McCloud: Now that we've looked at a few real-world examples, let's take a look at each of the toolkit's three sections that helped guide these research teams. We'll first look at the stakeholder analysis section.

Who are stakeholders? Stakeholders are individuals or groups who influence, or influenced by the research, either directly or indirectly, and those who have an interest in the research. A stakeholder might be a funder, a policymaker, another researcher or a civil society organization.

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Tess McLoud: The stakeholder analysis section can help you identify those influential individuals or groups who might use your research and plan effective engagement with them. By enhancing stakeholder engagement during your research, you can increase the overall impact of your research insights or technical innovations.

You can use the stakeholder analysis section when you want to understand your stakeholders' interests, influences, motivations, and knowledge on the subject matter.

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Tess McLoud: You can also use it to determine which stakeholders are the most important to engage in the research process, and when and how to engage them. And this section can also help you learn tips for how to interview your stakeholders.

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Tess McLoud: This section has five steps that will lead you through the stakeholder analysis with a set of worksheets that turn the theoretical information into hands-on learning. For example, the stakeholder information worksheet will help you organize what you know about your stakeholders' knowledge and views of your topic, their preferred communication methods, and their motivation and capacity to engage with you.

The stakeholder prioritization worksheet will help you determine which stakeholders you want to put the most effort into engaging according to level of interest and influence, and the stakeholder interview guide helps you plan and prepare for stakeholder interviews to maximize the information you gather and the impact you achieve.

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Tess McLoud: Stay tuned for more information on the next webinars in this series, where we'll dive into each of these sections in more detail, including looking more closely at these worksheets. Full details on the dates and times for those next webinar sessions will come at the end of today's session.

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Tess McLoud: Looking back at the graphic, you can see that the stakeholder analysis section is very important at the very beginning of the research process, when you are developing your research questions. Using this section as early as possible gives stakeholders an opportunity to give their input before your research questions and approach are finalized, which establishes a strong engagement and



support from the start. Since stakeholder roles may vary at each stage of the research process, the stakeholder analysis will be useful at each step to ensure that engagement is an ongoing, iterative process that continues throughout the project.

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Tess McLoud: Now, let's look at the Communication Products Section. The Communication Products section will help you craft main messages and choose the right format to share your research insights or technical innovations with stakeholders in a way that motivates them to use your evidence to inform policies, programs, or practices.

Because all of the toolkit sections work together, you'll find that completing the stakeholder analysis section will provide you with essential information about your target audience to inform your choice and development of communication products in this section. The R2A plan section, which we'll discuss in a moment, will help you strategically plan how to use your communication products and will be part of tracking their use.

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Tess McLoud: You should use the communication products section when you want to tell a story using your data and information. This section can also show you how to tailor your main messages to your audience's interests. And it can help you package your research results in the format that is most likely to capture your stakeholders' attention, so the results will be used.

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Tess McLoud: As with the stakeholder analysis section, the Communication Products Section has worksheets, templates, and examples that will help you move from concept to concrete communication product. The worksheets in this section can help you develop communication objectives, craft main messages and create an outline for the appropriate product type to reach your audience.

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Tess McLoud: The communication products section is most relevant later in the research process during the analysis and write up stage and dissemination and follow up stage. This is because you need to have sufficient data to support your claims, clear results, and actionable evidence-based recommendations before developing a strong communication product.

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Tess McLoud: Now let's look at the remaining section, which covers the research-to-action plan or R2A Plan. The R2A plan section helps you develop a step-by-step plan to communicate your research findings, attract influential stakeholders, and ensure your research leads to action. You should revisit and update your R2A plan over time. As things evolve over the course of your research project, you can use the R2A plan section when you want to create a strategic path from research generation to research utilization by drawing from your stakeholder analysis and effectively sharing any communication products you've developed.

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Tess McLoud: You can also use this section to identify the types of changes or decisions that could be made based on your research evidence. For example, can your findings inform program planning design and messaging for policy change? Maybe they can influence strategic investments?

This section can also help you ensure your messages are clearly communicated, compelling and credible to your audience. Poor communication is a barrier to research uptake. For example, using technical or academic jargon, and not providing clear actionable recommendations for your audience can prevent them from understanding and using your research findings or innovations.

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Tess McLoud: This section also helps you identify opportunities to highlight your research findings and generate interest in their use. For example, are there budget or policy processes that you should take advantage of? What about strategic or programmatic planning? When would it be strategic to share your research or your innovations?

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Tess McLoud: The R2A Plan section includes seven steps with accompanying templates and worksheets that walk you through the process of creating, implementing, and measuring the success of your own research-to-action plan. The comprehensive template included in the toolkit has exercises for each of the seven steps in the development process working through that template will help you develop and refine a tailored R2A plan that will enable you to effectively transform your research into impact. The comprehensive R2A plan template included in this section highlights where in the R2A planning process you can pull from your stakeholder analysis and your communication products.

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Tess McLoud: As the graphic shows, the R2A plan section is most relevant at the very start when you're developing your research questions and at the later stages of analysis and write up and dissemination and tracking. As you begin planning your research, you can use the R2A plan section to help you think

about how you want your results to be used, and how to involve and inform your stakeholders throughout each stage of the research process. Later, this section can help you assess your results, determine who needs to hear about them and develop a plan to convey significant implications to these stakeholders. It's a good idea to revisit your R2A plan throughout the process to make updates and use it to guide your work.

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Tess McLoud: We're going to return now for a moment to the full graphic of the toolkit section mapped onto the research process because we want to emphasize that the three sections of the toolkit are complementary rather than standalone components of the research translation process. So, you may give more attention to one component at specific stages.

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Tess McLoud: Each section will inform and draw from the others over the course of the whole process. For example, completing the stakeholder analysis section will provide you with essential information about your target audience that will inform your choice and development of communication products and your strategy for reaching those audiences through your R2A plan.

The communication products section in turn will draw from the stakeholder analysis section and will help shape the R2A plan. The R2A Plan section supports the effective sharing of your communication products and draws from the stakeholder analysis to create a strategic path from research generation to research utilization.

Revisiting your stakeholder analysis and R2A plan in tandem can help you strengthen each of those tools.

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Tess McLoud: Much of the information we've shared today, including the research process graphic is available in a fact sheet that you can download from the RTAC website. We're sharing a link in the chat now for easy reference. This fact sheet is a great item to share with your partners or colleagues who might be interested in the toolkit, because it provides a concise overview of the toolkit, and contains links to the different sections.

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Tess McLoud: Now that we watch through the toolkit together, we're going to show a short video from an international research partnership in India and the U.S. that used principles from the toolkit to help popularize their technology for off-grid clean energy cooling for affordable storage of perishables for bottom-of-the-pyramid farmers. Thanks to what they learned from this toolkit, the research team was

able to dramatically increase the reach of their new technology and gain support from influential businesses, political offices, news agencies, and government ministries.

To best hear the video, you may want to turn up the volume on your computer.

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Video: Dr. Sangeeta Chopra, principal scientist at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute here in New Delhi, India, I'm working on solar refrigerated evaporatively cool structures with Dr. Randolph Beaudry from Michigan State University.

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Video: Yeah. Thanks for the introduction. I'm. Randy Beaudry, as Sangeeta mentioned, working at Michigan State University in the Department of Horticulture. Been working here for about 33 years in the area of post-harvest, both biological and technological aspects.

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Video: So, let's first review the technology of solar refrigerated, evaporatively cold structures, shall we Dr. Beaudry?

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Video: Sounds like a good idea.

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Video: Solar Panels of five kilowatts are used to run the 18,000 BTU per hour refrigeration system. The walls of the structure are made up of wetted fabric to reduce the heat load and cause cooling by evaporation. The outside temperature in this instance is around 16 Celsius, and the inside temperature is around 0.3 degrees Celsius.

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Video: And let's look inside. You see there is a water battery suspended from under the ceiling. This contains cold water for nighttime cooling, and the indoor unit has a split evaporator coil. Part of the refrigerant is cooling the air during daytime. And the other part of the refrigerant is cooling water, and this water is pumped in the water battery for nighttime cooling. And this electronics is for regulating the power of the refrigeration system.

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Video: So, we think it is very important that this technology needs to get into the hands of farming communities in order to have an impact. This is where the Research Translation Toolkit comes in. The toolkit goes beyond working with the end users and enables policymakers and other influencers to become familiar with the technical and conceptual basis of our work. They can then use this information in their own power structure to affect broader changes than would be possible by our little team working with one farmer group at a time.

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Video: As a part of the toolkit, our team use principles of the stakeholder analysis, to learn how to prepare questioners, and how to interview stakeholders, to extract information about their needs in the context of their jobs, whether they be farmers, educators, influencers, or policymakers. Another module of the toolkit dealt with the development of communication products. Our team used principles we learned in this module to prepare policy papers, websites, social media, interviews, scientific and social discourse. This helped us to popularize our technology among a broad range of peoples.

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Video: The Research-To-Action Planning module helped us to make our goals more concrete by setting up a schedule of activities that we would then follow. This was important because it helped us go from a theoretical path to real action, engaging in the development of leaflets, demonstrations, interviews, etc. This became part of our scheduled events for the year, and because they were scheduled well in advance, it provided opportunities for the team members in the U.S. to participate, enhancing their interactions and outcomes.

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Video: Right? We found it interesting that we could not always know in what form support for the project would emerge. For instance, after interviewing the Director of IARI, he funded the construction of a demonstration unit which was then the focus of numerous visits, not only by farmers and farm advisors, but also high-ranking and influential individuals from news agencies, businesses, political offices, and agricultural ministry operations. In total, there were several thousand in-person interactions with the demonstration site and the scope of resulting news media coverage had the potential to connect with over 10 million people based on their distribution numbers. So, this was an amazing result from a single conversation conducted as part of the research-to-action program.

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Video: In terms of our personal growth, our experience using principles from the Research Translation Toolkit taught us to talk easily about our technology to any interest group. Practice does make perfect, after all. It enhanced our communication skills and helped to clarify the message, which was slightly different, depending on the orientation of the listener. Farmers would have more advantages learning that refrigeration could bring to their bottom line. Policymakers would hear more about how, on-farm cooling fulfilled farmers' needs, and how the effort required more resources to get into more communities. The effort continues.

Recently, our widespread network of informed individuals brought about invitations to speak at scientific venues, an inclusion in a number of international proposals to secure funding, to further expand the reach of our work to places like Kenya and Ethiopia. So that kind of sums it up. Would you like to say anything else, Dr. Beaudry?

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Video: Yeah, I would, actually –I've got a couple of comments to make. This does remind me a bit of our extension service, and how we use that to translate our findings in the laboratory to use in the field. But it also goes beyond that and includes this act of talking with people who are decision makers as well as policymakers. And so, for that I found it very valuable to be involved in the RTAC program. How about you?

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Video: I think it has been very valuable for me too. Most of the scientists here do not undergo this kind of training for taking the technologies from lab to the land, as we would say. So, this training program has been really very beneficial. It lays the roadmap for this purpose.

Wonderful! Thank you.

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Tess McLoud: Fantastic. Thank you.

And I'm pleased to share that the researchers from this excellent video are joining us here today. And so they are also available to answer any questions you may have related to the video and the things that they've shared. So please feel free to add those into the Q&A function as we go to the question and answer portion for today.

Okay, great. So we hope these examples have been helpful in illustrating concrete applications of the toolkit and the ways in which this tool can help you amplify the reach and impact of your research findings.

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Tess McCloud: The entire toolkit is available for download from the RTAC website. Since there are several sections and multiple components of each section, we've also created a short video explaining how to easily access all of the resources the toolkit has to offer. We'll preview a few moments of the video now, but you can access the full-length version on the RTAC website using a link provided in the chat.

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Video: The Research Translation Toolkit includes three separate sections that users can download from the RTAC website. Each section consists of a set of files that includes the main guide, accompanying worksheets, examples, templates, and other resources. A troubleshooting guide and a fact sheet on the toolkit are also available for download.

There are three steps you should follow to download each section. From the toolkit landing page on the RTAC website, navigate to the top of the screen and click the teal arrow to open a drop-down menu with each of the toolkit sections. Click on the title of the section you'd like to download and press the red download button. This will create a zip file in the downloads folder of your computer. This zip file includes all the files for that section of the toolkit.

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Julie MacCartee: Great. Thank you so much, Tess. So again, you can watch that video in full. We'll send that out with our post-event resources, and it'll also be linked on the toolkit main page, where the toolkit can be downloaded, so that you can get step-by-step instructions on using the toolkit.

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Julie MacCartee: All right. So that was a quick overview of what the toolkit contains. And now we have time for some questions, and we will start with those that have already been put into the question and answer feature. But please put in more questions. There's no question Julie MacCartee: too simple or complex. And please remember that you can ask questions of the research team that was shared in the prior video as well.

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Julie MacCartee: So first, I will start with a question for our PRB colleagues. "Do you recommend using all of the tools in the research translation toolkit in conjunction? About how much time do folks typically put toward research translation as part of the total research effort?"

That's a great question.

00:37:49.230 --> 00:37:56.310

Tess McLoud: So I believe my colleague Jill was wanting to field this one first. So, Jill, can I let you take that one?

00:38:01.530 --> 00:38:35.249

Jill Chanley: Yes, so I think that we know that research translation is part of the whole process. So, you should be thinking about your research translation efforts even from the very beginning in each stage, as you saw with the graphic that we showed.

So, at various stages you'll have more effort put in, but it's definitely something that you should be thinking out from day one. And I invite Julie to add any thoughts that she might have.

00:38:39.070 --> 00:39:07.034

Julie MacCartee: Yeah, I think that it's a great point that it's ideal to be thinking about research translation from day one. But of course, if that wasn't the case, it's never too late, right, to start thinking strategically through how what you want your research to accomplish. What your kind of lay person recommendations are. Who, you know, the audiences that you want to share with.

00:39:07.046 --> 00:39:41.590

Of course, I think the question about how much time that's a tough one. That's definitely one of those "it depends" type of questions. But carving whatever amount of time you think you need—carving out some intentional time, right?

That's always really what it's about in my book—being intentional, not just assuming that the knowledge or data or recommendations we want to convey will automatically be used. But being intentional about thinking about how we're going to help that happen.

00:39:48.570 --> 00:40:13.930

Julie MacCartee: All right. And we had a few other questions come in that I think we can highlight as well that we also kind of actively answered in in the Q&A feature.

But an anonymous attendee asked whether there are constraints or limits in using this toolkit for program or policy evaluations rather than for research projects. I think that's a great question.

00:40:15.420 --> 00:41:01.110

Julie MacCartee: There are no constraints at all in using the toolkit. Anyone can download it. Anyone can use it for any purpose if you find it helpful for translating other types of knowledge that aren't



necessarily based in a scientific research program. You are welcome to do so, and I think that several of the tools are very relevant for that, and, you know, program evaluations, policy evaluations, are their own type of research, or even, you know, data that's coming out of monitoring evaluation and learning plans for various implementation projects. All are their own form of research, and I think this toolkit could be relevant to those as well.

00:41:06.100 --> 00:41:10.131

Alright. Let's see any additional questions.

00:41:10.143 --> 00:41:13.379

Celia Laskowski: Julie, if I might add.

Julie MacCartee: Please go ahead.

00:41:13.400 --> 00:41:29.130

Celia Laskowski: There were two questions in the chat that were both similar. And basically, it was, "what if the findings of the research are negative? So how would you talk with stakeholders in that case, if they might not like the results?"

00:41:30.720 --> 00:41:55.709

Julie MacCartee: I think that—I love that question, and I also look to all of you. Many of you are scientific researchers who have joined us today, so I'm interested in your takes on this, as well. But what if findings are more negative, or are more like no findings, or that there was no finding. Perhaps a research program was funded, and there's no solid conclusions that can come from it.

00:41:55.820 --> 00:42:31.090

Julie MacCartee: I think many of us would agree that all information is important, even if the finding is that there is no association between two things, or— that a new— and new— sorry— implementation effort is not effective. It's just as important to share that information. And so I do think that this toolkit can could help you think strategically through what exactly do you want to convey and with whom. I see that as...as important as well.

00:42:31.720 --> 00:43:20.839

Celia Laskowski: And if I could just add to that, Julie. The toolkit helps think through, not only when you have your findings, but then grounding that into kind of the relevance. Why is this important? And then a recommendation. So kind of even if you have information that might not be extremely pleasant to receive for a donor or whatever stakeholder you're thinking about, what your recommendation is, knowing the information and the evidence. And really what we're getting at is we want our actions to be based in evidence, so it's not necessarily a bad thing if this—the data doesn't come out how you think it might or hope it might. It's then pivoting from there. And how do you package that to move forward with real evidence.

00:43:22.950 --> 00:44:14.020

Julie MacCartee: Yeah, great. And I see Dick Tinsley—hi Dick. Nice to see you. It's been a while. “If you cannot accept the results you may be biased right?” So, keeping an eye towards our own biases and the potential biases of our audiences throughout is an important approach, and I see— I love how you put that.

You know it. A lot of this toolkit helps us get towards recommendations that are relevant to others. It's easy to assume that our findings will speak for themselves but often policymakers, decision makers need that extra step, need help getting to the “so what,” to the recommendations. And so, this toolkit helps walk through communicating to get there.

00:44:17.280 --> 00:44:37.150

Julie MacCartee: I see from Jennifer, “Sometimes a negative finding can still be communicated as a recommendation. Flip the negative. A barrier into a practice aims to overcome it.” Yeah, Great. Thank you.

All right. Let me pull up the Q&A again. Do we have any other questions that have come through?

00:44:46.320 --> 00:45:03.709

Celia Laskowski: It looks like there's one from anonymous that—Oh, sorry, from Millie – “Are there any experiences and good practices in building capacity for demand and use of research for decision making?” I think.

00:45:06.080 --> 00:45:27.169

Julie MacCartee: Oh, yes, I see it now. Yeah. Building capacity for demand and use. So, in other words, perhaps building capacity at a government agency for demanding and using more research for decision making.

00:45:29.300 --> 00:46:08.900

Julie MacCartee: I feel like that's a really...really great question. I'm trying to think through. I invite my colleagues to think this through as well. So, in other words, you know, we're all doing our part to be strategic about who we are talking to, to convey things and lay language. But we also want to build that capacity and remove those barriers, and that that may not always be in the manageable interest of the scientific researcher. But I think that is in the manageable interest of agencies like USAID, or you know, NGOs who are working to help with that prioritization.

00:46:09.900 --> 00:46:49.739

Sangeeta Chopra: Hi! I'm Sangeeta here, and I thought I could just answer a little bit. So yeah, I think, working through this RTAC toolkit, the experience of this enhanced my own skills. So my own capacity got built for using— for taking this research to policymakers or to the farmers. And, and so RTAC helped in that, in capacity building. Necessarily. So yeah. This experience was really useful. That's what I want to say.

00:46:53.320 --> 00:47:36.390

Julie MacCartee: Great. Thank you so much. I see some interesting comments coming in in the Q&A box from Michael. "In one case we had a person who was very enthusiastic about our research findings, and she pushed it in the particular country. Then another government came in, and this person left. So the program was killed." Yeah, I think that's probably something we can all identify with as there's turnover—losing that continuity, losing your champions. Those are absolutely challenges, and we hope that the toolkit can help you identify additional stakeholders to engage with.

00:47:43.360 --> 00:48:08.909

And. Jill, I see you also just answered the question from Muhammad about how important is it to take inputs from possible stakeholders for developing a product. And Jill responds, "This is a great question. We invite you to join us for our webinar on March 2nd, where we'll take a closer look at the communication product section of the toolkit."

00:48:08.960 --> 00:48:30.890

Julie MacCartee: Yes, and also our next immediate upcoming webinar focuses on stakeholder analysis. And so, we will dig in a bit more into why it's important to understand and interview stakeholders, how to connect with them and take their inputs or ideas. So, we hope that that is helpful as well.

00:48:31.240 --> 00:49:14.499

Julie MacCartee: Ultimately, we also want to acknowledge that so much of the toolkit is designed to help you brainstorm and think through your priorities, your needs, your ideas in your context, because every context is different.

There may be some cases where you need to provide just two or three short recommendations. Others where a stakeholder needs every technical detail. Some where you target certain stakeholders, other contexts where you target others. So, the toolkit may not have every answer, but we have designed it with the hopes that it will help you get to the answers that you need.

00:49:20.900 --> 00:50:03.520

Julie MacCartee: All right. You're welcome to continue placing your questions in the Q&A feature. But we'd also like to take a moment to know how you might be interested, or plan to use this toolkit in your own work. So, we'll do a quick exercise as we start to wrap up.

As before, we're going to put a link into the chat that you can use to add your answer, and you can also use the thumbs up to kind of agree with other participants' answers. So, take a look in the chat. Thank you to Jill for posting the link.

00:50:04.880 --> 00:50:59.069

Julie MacCartee: And let us know how you plan to or how you are interested in using this Research Translation Toolkit in your own work. We'll take a moment to do so. Thanks to those who are starting to enter their ideas.

00:51:01.870 --> 00:51:25.509

Julie MacCartee: One person wrote: "We want to convey the impact of our program over the past 10 years." Wonderful! So, a long timeline, with probably lots of data and lessons learned that are worth conveying and informing other programs and celebrating successes. Hopefully, thank you. I see someone, or two, at least two respondents are already using it. That's exciting to hear.

00:51:30.930 --> 00:51:53.080

Julie MacCartee: A nice response here – you want to identify policy solutions that are technically correct, politically feasible and organizationally implementable. Great, so potentially using the toolkit to get to, like, the most practical policy recommendations that may actually have a chance of being implemented.

00:51:55.050 --> 00:52:21.930

Julie MacCartee: "More reflection on stakeholders. This knowledge should not be taken for granted." Yeah, I think that's something that a lot of us do, right? We all have limited time, so little time, and it's easy to just assume what we think our stakeholders want or need, without taking the time to...to either interview them, which itself takes time, or at least to strategically think through their needs, how they communicate, etc.

00:52:30.440 --> 00:53:07.719

Julie MacCartee: I see, someone says, "by introducing the toolkit to researchers that they work with who are beginning a research co-creation process, along with stakeholders and counterparts."

Great! So, sharing it out with researchers.

Great! Thank you. These are exciting responses to hear, and we hope that it does provide you with the tools that you need. I'll give you a moment to enter any final responses or to read others' and upload them.

00:53:09.610 --> 00:53:41.210

Julie MacCartee: I see someone has a five-year program ending soon, and hopes that the toolkit will be useful to disseminate the most important results. Wonderful! I hope that the results are used and noticed. It can be hard that we all are suffering from information overload from knowledge product overload. And so, kind of short and purposeful, targeted are really important ways to communicate.

00:53:49.280 --> --> 00:54:09.040

Julie MacCartee: And thank you to those who are interested in sharing the toolkit with other researchers in your communities that you work with, whether at your university, kind of blending partners.

Great! Thank you so much. We're excited to hear that many of you are interested and using the toolkit.

00:54:11.710 --> 00:55:16.859

Julie MacCartee: And on that note, we would love to hear from you in the future if you do use the toolkit. We'd love to hear your stories about using it in your work, and if we go back to the slide deck, we have an email address that is available, and we'll make sure that it's available on the toolkit landing page as well, where you can share stories with us. These stories offer valuable lessons and guidance for others who are working to get their research disseminated and used.

And so, if you share a story with us where you use this toolkit, and it was helpful to you. We may follow up with you to ask permission to share your story in a USAID blog post or use it internally as an example.

We would ask your permission first, but we'd love to hear your stories and experiences. So, you can email [itr.researchfeedback@usaid.gov](mailto:itr.researchfeedback@usaid.gov) if you have used this and would like to share your story.

00:55:20.260 --> 00:55:56.919

Julie MacCartee: As mentioned at the start of today's webinar, this is the first in a four-part series, and, as you can see from the schedule here, the next three webinars will go into greater depth on each of the three sections of the toolkit, and provide a chance to kind of dig into these concepts, ask questions, share your ideas.

We invite you to join us for the next webinar in the series in two weeks, which will focus on the stakeholder analysis section of the toolkit, and will take place on February 23. You can register for the remaining three webinars on our webinar website. And we'll add that link to the chat.

00:55:57.280 --> 00:56:33.530

Julie MacCartee: And you'll also be able to access the slides, a recording of today's webinar and other post event resources on this website. We also plan to send a...a nice summary email to everyone who registered for this webinar, making sure you have all the resources you need and links to register for the additional webinars if you are interested.

All right, not seeing any additional questions in the Q. A. Box. I think we can officially wrap up the webinar today.

00:56:33.850 --> 00:57:01.130

Julie MacCartee: So, I would like to thank all of our presenters. To everyone who joined us today, on behalf of USAID, thank you for taking the time to join this webinar. We look forward to seeing you at future webinars or in the research community. We're interested in your findings, and we hope that you go forth, share your findings and use this toolkit. So, thank you so much to everyone who helped produce this webinar today. Take care and have a great rest of the day.