Transforming Research into Programs and Policies

How To Use the Research Translation Toolkit’s Research-to-Action Plan Section

March 9, 2023

While we wait for others to join, please introduce yourself in the chat by entering your name, affiliation, country of residence, and why you joined this webinar.
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. It is divided into three sections:

• Stakeholder Analysis.
• Communication Products.
• Research-to-Action (R2A) Plan.

When used together, these three sections can help you craft strategies and messages to influence decisions and achieve development impact more effectively throughout the research process.
TODAY’S OBJECTIVES

• Review the contents of the Research-to-Action Plan section.
• Learn why, when, and how to use it.
• Hear from a guest speaker about their experience using the section.
• Answer your questions.
What’s one challenge you face in ensuring your research leads to action?
R2A PLAN SECTION

WHAT, WHY, WHEN & HOW
WHAT IS IT?

The R2A Plan section helps you develop a step-by-step plan to:

• Communicate your research findings.
• Attract influential stakeholders.
• Ensure your research leads to action.
WHY SHOULD YOU USE IT?

Use the R2A Plan section when you want to:

• Create a strategic plan to leverage your stakeholder analysis and communication products.

• Identify the types of changes or decisions that could be made based on your research evidence.

• Ensure your messages are clearly communicated, compelling, and credible to your audience.

• Identify opportunities to highlight your research findings and generate interest in their use.
WHEN SHOULD YOU USE IT IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS?

**R2A PLAN**
Use this section as you begin planning your research to help you think about how you want your results to be used and how to involve/inform stakeholders throughout the research process.

**R2A PLAN**
Use this section to assess your results, determine who needs to hear about them, and develop a plan to convey significant implications to these stakeholders.

1. **01** Research question development
2. **02** Concept and proposal write-up
3. **03** Study implementation
4. **04** Analysis and write-up
5. **05** Dissemination and follow-up
EACH STEP IN R2A PLANNING BRIDGES THE RESEARCH-TO-PRACTICE GAP

Set a Research-to-Action Goal
Define the programmatic, policy, or strategic outcome you want to achieve.

Engage Stakeholders Throughout the Research
Build relationships and involve end users at every step in the research process.

Craft Key Messages
Identify relevant findings, frame the implications, and ensure recommendations are contextualized and actionable.

Foster the Use of Evidence
Provide end users with training, tools, or assistance to integrate the findings into their work.

Identify Your Stakeholders
Determine who has the power or position to take the needed actions.

Assess the Policy Environment
Coordinate your work with external processes, timelines, international days of attention, or other critical happenings.

Package and Disseminate Evidence
Use compelling and visually appealing formats to share evidence with those who need it.

TRACK AND MEASURE SUCCESS
R2A PLANNING TO SUPPORT FOOD SECURITY STRATEGIES IN NEPAL

• Developed device to measure pesticide residue on vegetable and fruit samples.

• Developed technology to detect the infective stages of parasitic organisms.
GOAL:  
- To increase testing capacity to detect pesticide contamination of vegetables and fruit using PesticidePAD technology.

OBJECTIVES

1) To get approval of PesticidePAD from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development.

2) To adapt PesticidePAD based on feedback from stakeholders.
## R2A PLANNING TO SUPPORT FOOD SECURITY STRATEGIES IN NEPAL (CONTINUED)

Time Duration (2021–2022) - 18 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Aug-Oct</th>
<th>Nov-Jan</th>
<th>Feb-Apr</th>
<th>May-Jul</th>
<th>Aug-Oct</th>
<th>Nov-Jan</th>
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<td>Organize meeting with NARC to develop a program for validation study.</td>
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<td>Compare three methods of pesticide detection—PesticidePAD, RBPR, and GC-MS—in collaboration with NARC.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Share the output from activity 1b among NARC officials and get recommendation.</td>
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<td>2a)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Organize stakeholder meeting and technology demonstration.</td>
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<td>2b)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organize short trainings for students, private sector, community groups, and farmers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2c)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce the PesticidePAD lab module in university curricula/trainings.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CREATING YOUR R2A PLAN STEP BY STEP

**STEP 1a:** Set Research-to-Action Goals.

**STEP 1b:** Summarize Major Project Results.

**STEP 2:** Stakeholder Analysis—Identify, Prioritize, and Engage.

**STEP 3:** Assess the Policy Environment for Research Use.

**STEP 4:** Distill Main Messages and Develop Actionable Recommendations.

**STEP 5:** Package Research in User-Friendly Formats and Disseminate.

**STEP 6:** Develop an R2A Plan Timeline and Checklist.

**STEP 7:** Regularly Track Progress & Measure Success.
STEP 1A
SET RESEARCH-TO-ACTION GOALS

Develop R2A goals that focus on the program, policy, or practice that your research results can help change.

**GOALS**

Goals are broad:
- they focus on the big picture and the long term.

**OBJECTIVES**

Objectives are specific:
- they focus on the short term and the way to reach a goal.

**Remember:** Your R2A goals are different from your research goals.
STEP 1A
SET RESEARCH-TO-ACTION GOALS

Develop R2A goals that focus on the program, policy, or practice that your research results can help change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOALS</th>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Goals are broad:</strong> they focus on the big picture and the long term.</td>
<td><strong>Objectives are specific:</strong> they focus on the short term and the way to reach a goal.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Remember:** Your R2A goals are different from your research goals.
评估你的项目研究，以确定哪些结果可以用于程序或政策决策或用于指导实践。这将有助于你的R2A目标。
STEP 2

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS—IDENTIFY, PRIORITIZE, AND ENGAGE

Determine who needs to know about the important findings you’ve identified so they can act on them.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

See the Stakeholder Analysis section for more information on how to identify and engage stakeholders in research.
Factors that motivate stakeholders to use research in decision-making:

- Awareness
- Ownership
- Clarity of Message
- Feasibility of Action
- Timing
- Political and Other Support
STEP 3

ASSESS THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR RESEARCH USE

Understand the policy environment and decision makers’ priorities so you can share research in ways that:

• Gain attention.

• Are easy to understand.

• Are likely to be acted upon by your intended stakeholders.
STEP 3
ASSESS THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR RESEARCH USE (CONTINUED)

**Windows of opportunity:** Relevant opportunities to distribute your research to key stakeholders.
STEP 4
DISTILL MAIN MESSAGES AND DEVELOP ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase the chances that your target audience will take the action you intend by developing main messages and actionable recommendations tailored to their interests.
STEP 4

DISTILL MAIN MESSAGES AND DEVELOP ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS (CONTINUED)

FINDINGS
What are the relevant data or evidence?

IMPLICATIONS
What does it matter?

RECOMMENDATIONS
What should be done?

The audience should be able to easily understand the story you are telling by reading the main messages of each part.
STEP 5
PACKAGE RESEARCH IN USER-FRIENDLY FORMATS AND DISSEMINATE

Choose formats that match your intended audience and purpose to make your findings more convincing and foster evidence use.
STEPT 5

PACKAGE RESEARCH IN USER-FRIENDLY FORMATS AND DISSEMINATE (CONTINUED)

Strategically select communication channels and leverage windows of opportunity to control where and how often you share your information with stakeholders.

Dissemination Channel Frequency Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel Type</th>
<th>Recommended Frequency</th>
<th>Audience Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>5-7x per week</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listservs and Newsletters</td>
<td>2-3x per month</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge-Sharing Platforms and Websites</td>
<td>1x per month</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>1-2x per quarter</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Calls/Outreach</td>
<td>1-2x per quarter</td>
<td>Stakeholder (Non-Expert &amp; Expert)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings and Presentations</td>
<td>1-3x per quarter</td>
<td>Stakeholder (Non-Expert &amp; Expert)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DEVELOP AN R2A PLAN TIMELINE AND CHECKLIST

Develop a timeline for your R2A plan activities to stay on track to meet your R2A goals.
### R2A Objective

**Disseminate Research at Upcoming Conference**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>SUBTASK</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
<th>RESPONSIBLE PERSON</th>
<th>TIME PERIOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Produce a policy brief for stakeholders.</td>
<td>Identify stakeholders/audience.</td>
<td>Communications support to develop research brief (subscription(s) to online platforms to reach priority stakeholders).</td>
<td>Researchers A and B.</td>
<td>March 2021 – June 2021; share research brief ahead of and during the conference taking place in June.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present research during a side session at Conference.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Travel funds.</td>
<td>Researcher A or B to present.</td>
<td>January 2021 – June 2021; Administrative Assistant to handle logistics and send invitations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP 6 | RESOURCE

R2A PLAN CHECKLIST

Review this checklist to make sure you have included the main components of an R2A Plan and planned sufficient time to complete them.

☐ You have a clear understanding of your research's main results and implications and can express them in easy-to-understand language.

☐ You have determined your overarching R2A goals and objectives.

☐ You have identified the key stakeholders that need to know about your research.

☐ You have assessed the policy environment and identified windows of opportunity for sharing your research findings with your stakeholders.

☐ You have decided what your key stakeholders should know about your research findings, and crafted main messages to communicate your findings, implications, and recommendations.

☐ You have determined the best format to reach your targeted stakeholders with your research and the best channel(s) through which to reach them.

☐ You have developed a plan for implementing the R2A activities in a set period of time.
STEP 7
REGULARLY TRACK PROGRESS & MEASURE SUCCESS

Develop outputs and outcomes to assess whether you are reaching your objectives and R2A goals:

• Output: Immediate and tangible product.
• Short-term outcome: Direct result of action or activity.
• Medium-term outcome: Subsequent change or action linked to activity or short-term outcome.
• Long-term outcome: Research-to-Action goal achieved.
Please create a chart for each objective. This chart describes the activities your team will do to meet each objective and how they will track progress on these activities. In each chart, note each activity your team plans to help achieve the objective and then what they expect to happen as a result of the activity: expected output, expected short-term outcome, and expected medium-to-long-term outcome. These outcomes are what your team could reasonably expect to observe during a project and as a result of activities that happen over five years or less. Short-term is usually less than a year.

**NOTE:** The top row of each chart is for you to write your overall R2A goal and R2A objective, to help you remember that your objectives are steps to achieving your big-picture goal.

### R2A GOAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLANNED ACTIVITY</th>
<th>EXPECTED OUTPUT</th>
<th>EXPECTED SHORT-TERM OUTCOME</th>
<th>EXPECTED MEDIUM-TO-LONG-TERM OUTCOME</th>
<th>ACTIVITY START DATE TO END DATE</th>
<th>FINAL OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Live on one-on-one meetings with potential collaborators in agricultural extension.</td>
<td>Example: Number of farmers and collaborators who attended the meeting.</td>
<td>Example: Ministry of agriculture officials report an increase in farmers using sustainable conservation technologies.</td>
<td>Example: Government funds allocated to on-farm research technology are high by the end of the project.</td>
<td>Example: June to September 2023</td>
<td>Example: The expected outcome is increased adoption of sustainable conservation technologies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**WORKSHEET | RESEARCH TRANSLATION TOOLKIT**

**R2A PROGRESS TRACKING**

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1. **SECTION 3 - RESEARCH ACTION PLAN**
# STEPS 1-7 | WORKSHEET

## R2A PLAN TEMPLATE

### R2A GOALS

List one or two primary R2A goals. You can revise them as needed, but we recommend finalizing the goals before moving on to the next step in the R2A Plan process. We recommended that you select only two or three goals that you can review progress on in the next one to two years.

**Goal 1:**

- **Name:**
- **Organization:**
- **Reference:**

**Goal 2:**

- **Name:**
- **Organization:**
- **Reference:**

### Stakeholders

Instructions: Identify the names, titles, organization, and the key themes where you would like to engage the stakeholder.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

### Box 4A: IDENTIFY YOUR R2A GOAL | R2A GOALS

What is the problem? What are the key findings? What are the activities that you prioritize based on your stakeholder and objectives?

1. Name:
2. Organization:
3. Reference:

### Box 5A: PRIMARY RESEARCH PRODUCTS

Identify any primary research products that you expect to use as the basis for your user-friendly print or digital products. This planning process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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</table>

### Step 4: DISTILL MAIN MESSAGES AND CONTEXT

Think about how you will share your research products through specific channels to reach your targeted stakeholders.

Harmonize your research communications with other stakeholders in your organization, critical process, and decision-making processes to simplify your messaging and market your intended stakeholders, reducing the risk of ineffective efforts or the need for additional work later.

Box 5A:

- **Box 5B: DISSEMINATE MAIN MESSAGES AND PRODUCTS THROUGH MULTIPLE CHANNELS**

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### Audience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Type of Dissemination</th>
<th>Reach</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>

**Confessional Events:**

- **Confessional Events:**
  - **柴索利亚国际会议**
  - **柴索利亚国际会议**

**Project Organized Virtual or in-Person Events:**

- **Project Organized Virtual or in-Person Events:**
  - **柴索利亚国际会议**
  - **柴索利亚国际会议**

**Digital Dissemination:**

- **Digital Dissemination:**
  - **柴索利亚国际会议**

**Media:**

- **Media:**
  - **柴索利亚国际会议**

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4. **SECTION 1: RESEARCH TO ACTION PLAN**

10. **SECTION 5: RESEARCH TO ACTION PLAN**

16. **SECTION 6: RESEARCH TO ACTION PLAN**

22. **SECTION 7: RESEARCH TO ACTION PLAN**

30. **SECTION 8: RESEARCH TO ACTION PLAN**
GUEST SPEAKER: DR. MARLENE LEE

USING THE R2A PLAN SECTION IN WEST AFRICA
MOTIVATION FOR USING THE RESEARCH TRANSLATION TOOLKIT

• Counting Women’s Work Project historically has produced estimates of time women, men, and children spend doing unpaid care work.

• These estimates are published in database at www.countingwomenswork.org.

• The effort has been guided by a paradigm about the effects of unpaid work on women’s economic status and what needs to change. The first step toward change being recognition of this work and the final step being action that changes national economic context and policy.
NON-PAID ACTIVITIES

Key Concepts

Unpaid Care Work
Work done for no pay to sustain households and care for household and community members. Includes direct care and housework.

Direct Care
Caretaking of children, elders, the sick and disabled in our households and communities. Includes volunteering.

Housework
Activities like cooking, cleaning, laundry, household maintenance, and management that benefit household members.

Education
Time spent in school, university, or other educational institution. Also includes time spent at home on study and homework.
TRANSITIONING TO ACTION

• PRB collaborated with a partner organization: Centre d’Excellence Régional en Economie Générationnelle (CREG).

• We facilitated use of selected tools from the R2A Plan section of the toolkit, working with country team members identified by ONDD (Observatoire national du dividende démographique) in each country.

• Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Sénégal, Togo.
ANALYSIS WORKSHOPS PROVIDE “RESEARCH RESULTS”

- Data experts.
- Thematic experts.
- National Time Transfer Accounts.
- Report.
EXAMPLE COUNTRY RESEARCH ANALYSIS

Research Goal

• Integrate the monetary value of unpaid housework time into household income and GDP calculations.

Research Results

• Over the life cycle, the time devoted to domestic work is more important for women between the ages of 21 and 44, where it reaches 16 hours per week (at age 25) compared to just under 3 hours for men.

• The age at when the most time is spent on domestic work is age 25 for women and age 15 for men. The annual value of women’s unpaid work at this peak is more than six times the value for men.
Recommendations:

- Put in place mechanisms to measure and officially take into account unpaid domestic work in national production.
- Develop policies or strategies to reduce women's domestic work.
THE RESEARCH-TO-ACTION ACTIVITY

Three virtual meetings with each country’s team:

- Overview of the R2A planning process worksheet. Discussed portions of the worksheet completed by team for each meeting.
- R2A Progress Tracking.
THE OUTPUT

Country teams had a draft of components to help create a plan with:

- Draft research-to-action goals, objectives, and messages (with specific recommendations) relevant to intersection of their research implications and stakeholders’ priorities.

- Stakeholders identified (by name) with whom to share results and gauge interest in taking action.

- Specific information sharing events proposed, including presentations to members of national parliaments.

- Communication products needed were identified.
WHY WAS THE R2A PLANNING PROCESS USEFUL?

• Highlighting differences between research goals and actionable objectives.

• Framing the research results with specific stakeholder interests and influence in mind.

• Raising the important of putting research results in context—both country circumstances and combined with a broader research and policy literature.

• Recognizing limitations of researchers to take action and potential contributions of program and policy staff of NGOs and government units.
QUESTIONS?

ANSWERS!
HOW WILL YOU USE THIS SECTION IN YOUR OWN WORK?

• Apply it to find the right stakeholder or industrial collaboration.
• Design appropriate dissemination tools.
• To find a way to increase community participation.
• Plan how to present findings to key stakeholders to influence decision making.
• Identify appropriate stakeholders who will participate in upcoming dissemination meetings.
• Find out how to approach stakeholders.
• Help identify the appropriate dissemination plan based on audience.
• Strategically think about the best communications products for stakeholders.
• To prepare a policy brief I'm currently working on.
• We do a lot of these steps ad hoc, but this will help us apply them more systematically.
• Figure out who would be for or against the changes implied by our research.
• Train project staff on research-to-action approaches.
WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Share your story about how using the Research Translation Toolkit has influenced uptake of your research by emailing us at itr.researchfeedback@usaid.gov.
CLOSING REMARKS FROM RTAC’S PROJECT DIRECTOR

SUTHERLAND MILLER III
THANK YOU!

Acknowledgments

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