Research-to-Action Plan

Guide and Template 

Research can change the world—but only when it is communicated effectively to those who can improve programs and policies. This guide will help you develop a step-by-step plan to communicate your scientific research findings, engage influential stakeholders, and ensure your research leads to action.

**How do I use the guide and template?** As you navigate the **Research-to-Action (R2A) Plan Guide**, your research team will be led through the basic steps of the R2A process, including identifying and engaging stakeholders, planning for communication products to share your research, and developing a timeline to monitor your progress. Each section of the guide will provide definitions, examples, and instructions for identifying key elements of R2A specific to your research.

The R2A Plan Guide includes “type here” text boxes, which serve as brainstorming areas for entering answers relevant to your research. At the end of each section, a “Jump to the R2A Plan Template” link brings you to the **R2A Plan Template**, located at the end of the document. Here, you can enter the final inputs from each section into a clean template that will form your own standalone R2A plan. Your R2A plan can serve as your complete strategy for achieving your R2A goals and tracking your progress.

**Where can I find more detailed tools?** This R2A Plan Guide and Template is based on USAID’s Research Translation Toolkit. For more in-depth background, tools, and exercises on communication products, stakeholder analysis, and R2A planning, see the [Research Translation Toolkit](https://usaidlearninglab.org/resources/research-translation-toolkit).

Table of Contents

[**R2A Plan Guide** 2](#_Toc174969164)

[Section 1. Summarize Project Results 2](#_Toc174969165)

[Section 2. Set Your Research-to-Action Goals 3](#_Toc174969166)

[Section 3. Set Your Research-to-Action Objectives 4](#_Toc174969167)

[Section 4. Identify, Prioritize, and Engage Stakeholders 5](#_Toc174969168)

[Section 5: Identify Windows of Opportunity for Your Research to Influence Decision-Making 9](#_Toc174969169)

[Section 6. Create Main Messages and Develop Actionable Recommendations 10](#_Toc174969170)

[Section 7: Package Research in Appropriate, User-Friendly Formats and Disseminate 12](#_Toc174969171)

[Section 8: Develop a Research-to-Action Plan Timeline 16](#_Toc174969172)

[Section 9: Regularly Track Progress and Measure Success 17](#_Toc174969173)

[**R2A Plan Template** 19](#_Toc174969174)

[Research-to-Action Plan 20](#_Toc174969175)

R2A Plan Guide 

Section 1. Summarize Project Results

OVERVIEW

Provide a general overview of your major research results using simple phrases that non-technical audiences can understand. Summarizing your research here will help you keep the purpose of your work in mind as you brainstorm your R2A goals and think about the impact your findings could have. This quick overview of the highlights of your research will also make it easier to generate your messaging and communication products in later sections.

INSTRUCTIONS

[ ]  **Add a brief description of your research project in the spaces below.**

1. Name of research project: [Type here…]
2. Institution: [Type here…]
3. Principal investigator(s): [Type here…]
4. Team members: [Type here…]
5. The purpose of your research: [Type here…]
6. Summarize the methodology used in your research: [Type here…]
7. Name two or three significant results/findings: [Type here…]
8. Describe the research project timeline, including important dates such as when data collection took place: [Type here…]
9. Additional information, including links to papers or websites as applicable: [Type here…]

[>> Jump to the R2A Plan Template to fill in the Project](#Template1About) Summary

Section 2. Set Your R2A Goals

OVERVIEW

Think about the types of changes or decisions that could be made based on your research evidence. What is unique about your findings? Why do the findings matter? In other words, what exactly do you want people to do with the findings from your research project? This is your R2A goal.

Examples of actions that may be taken as a result of your research findings (these can take place at global, regional, national, or sub-national levels):

* Policymakers incorporate an issue into a policy or strategy.
* Research results inform agenda-setting and prioritization processes.
* Research results influence funding priorities or program spending.
* Decision-makers improve program design and implementation based on your research.

While you develop your R2A goal, consider the following questions:

* Why do my research results matter for [INSERT TOPIC, e.g., food security]?
* How can my research help [INSERT TOPIC/STAKEHOLDER]?

INSTRUCTIONS

[ ]  **List one or two R2A goals, structured as actions.**
*Tip: Remember that a goal is broad and focused on the long term.*

* Goal #1: [Type here…]
* Goal #2: [Type here…]

**Recommendation**
You can revise your R2A goals when needed, but we recommend identifying initial goals before moving on to further steps in the R2A Plan Process. We recommend that you select only the number of goals that you can make progress on in the next one to two years.

**Example**Assume that your research finding suggests that rural women and adolescent girls who have access to land and agricultural skills improve household food security by at least 10 percent. With this research, an R2A goal might be: to increase the proportion of rural women and adolescent girls with access to land and agricultural skills.

[>> Jump to the R2A Plan Template to fill in your Goals](#Template1pt5Goals)

Section 3. Set Your R2A Objectives

OVERVIEW

R2A objectives describe the concrete, intermediate steps that help you reach your R2A goal(s). It might take achieving several objectives to reach your intended goal. While goals are broad and focus on the big picture and the long term, objectives are specific; they focus on the short term and are measurable and achievable.

INSTRUCTIONS

[ ]  **Identify the objective(s) that will represent intermediate steps toward reaching the R2A goals you listed in Section 2.**

* Objective #1: [Type here…]
* Objective #2: [Type here…]
* Objective #3: [Type here…]

**Recommendation**
As you did with your R2A goal(s), structure your objective(s) as actions. More than one objective may be required to achieve an R2A goal.

**Example**Assuming the R2A goal is to increase the proportion of rural women and adolescent girls with access to land and agricultural skills, example objectives might be:

* To persuade the Ministry of Agriculture to develop (with the research team) a training curriculum to boost women’s and girls’ agricultural skills.
* To raise awareness of available land grants specifically for women and girls through outreach at local community centers and schools.

FINAL CHECK ON R2A GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

[ ]  **Ask yourself the questions below to check that your R2A goals and objectives make sense and can be distinguished from your research goals.** If so, your answers to these questions will be yes.

* Are my R2A goals and objectives directly related to my research findings?
* Do my combined goals and objectives tell what I want to accomplish and why?
* Is there a balance between ambitious aims and what is achievable?

[>> Jump to R2A Plan Template to fill in your Objectives](#Template1pt5Goals)

Section 4. Identify, Prioritize, and Engage Stakeholders

STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

OVERVIEW

Stakeholders are individuals or groups who influence or are influenced by your research or have interest in your research. When working to identify your stakeholders, consider both who may benefit from the research results and who may be negatively affected by the research results. Also consider who can affect or be affected by the research, either directly or indirectly.

INSTRUCTIONS

[ ]  **Check all that apply:** What types of groups have an interest in your findings? To ensure no important stakeholders are overlooked, be inclusive at this early stage as you list the stakeholders that apply in your situation below. While the process may initially yield more stakeholders than you can manage, you will prioritize your list in the next step of stakeholder analysis.

[ ]  Advocacy groups: [Type here…]

[ ]  Government ministries: [Type here…]

[ ]  Implementing partners: [Type here…]

[ ]  Local civil society organizations: [Type here…]

[ ]  Media: [Type here…]

[ ]  Donors: [Type here…]

[ ]  Private sector: [Type here…]

[ ]  Professional associations: [Type here…]

[ ]  Universities and research organizations: [Type here…]

[ ]  Service delivery organizations: [Type here…]

[ ]  Policymakers (national or subnational): [Type here…]

[ ]  Training organizations: [Type here…]

[ ]  USAID/Missions: [Type here…]

[ ]  Customers for a product or service: [Type here…]

[ ]  Other: [Type here…]

[ ]  Other: [Type here…]

[ ]  Other: [Type here…]

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

OVERVIEW

It is best practice to engage your stakeholders throughout the research process. Engaging them early fosters their feelings of ownership and promotes the use of your findings. If you have already worked with stakeholders on this research, keep them in mind when you develop this R2A plan. If you have not yet engaged your stakeholders, identify ways to involve them in your next steps.

INSTRUCTIONS

[ ]  **Select the stage(s) where you have already engaged stakeholders or plan to engage stakeholders during the implementation of this R2A plan.** The checklist below identifies several possible stages for stakeholder engagement and the rationale for engagement at each stage. Write in who you worked with during each stage.

[ ]  Prior to developing a concept note when applying for a grant, to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to inform the development of a research project in a way that will be useful to them.
*Stakeholder(s): [Type here…]*

[ ]  During research protocol development, stakeholders can provide input on elements such as the selection of study sites and local partners, the inclusion of key study questions, and the final design.
*Stakeholder(s): [Type here…]*

[ ]  During data collection and implementation, stakeholders are aware of the progress and feel engaged either through study tours/site visits or via email updates.
*Stakeholder(s): [Type here…]*

[ ]  When you have preliminary results, stakeholders can begin to consider findings and provide additional context, interpretation, and framing.
*Stakeholder(s): [Type here…]*

[ ]  When the results are final, stakeholders can help fine-tune main messages and strategize for dissemination.
*Stakeholder(s): [Type here…]*

[ ]  Dissemination planning, stakeholders can help identify the right people, platforms, products, and opportunities with which to share key outcomes. (Note that dissemination planning should start at the beginning of the study, not after you have results.)
*Stakeholder(s): [Type here…]*

[ ]  After findings have been disseminated, stakeholders can continue to communicate the findings and help gather information about outcomes.
*Stakeholder(s): [Type here…]*

STAKEHOLDER PRIORITIZATION

OVERVIEW

Stakeholders can be grouped into primary and secondary stakeholders based on how they may contribute to your R2A goals. Those that can contribute the most to your R2A goals are your **primary stakeholders**. They are the potential end users of your research and are those who have the power or influence to achieve your R2A goals. **Secondary stakeholders** are the individuals or groups who can influence the primary stakeholders, for example by raising attention to your findings or by putting pressure on the primary stakeholder to take action.

INSTRUCTIONS

[ ]  **Step 1. Consider the list of stakeholders you identified above and determine which stakeholders are most important to engage in the research process based on their interest and influence. Begin to prioritize your list of stakeholders by identifying your primary stakeholders and secondary stakeholders.**
Be as specific as possible with the names of individuals, organizations, or projects. Consider stakeholders who may fall outside the field in which you are working. Remember that stakeholders may exist at multiple levels, including in subnational, national, regional and global contexts.

Primary Stakeholders

[List primary stakeholders here]

Secondary Stakeholders

[List secondary stakeholders here]

[ ]  **Step 2.** **Identify the names, titles, organizations, and relevance of the top three stakeholders with whom you would like to engage in the next six months.**

**Stakeholder 1**

Name: [Type here…]

Title: [Type here…]

Organization: [Type here…]

Relevance: [Type here…]

**Stakeholder 2**

Name: [Type here…]

Title: [Type here…]

Organization: [Type here…]

Relevance: [Type here…]

**Stakeholder 3**

Name: [Type here…]

Title: [Type here…]

Organization: [Type here…]

Relevance: [Type here…]

[>> Jump to the R2A Plan Template to fill in your Stakeholders](#Template2Stakeholders)

Section 5. Identify Windows of Opportunity for Your Research to Influence Decision-Making

OVERVIEW

Once you have identified R2A goals, you’ll need to link them to your current context. This section will help you identify and take advantage of strategic opportunities for your research findings to be used and to have an impact. You should look for relevant opportunities to distribute your research to key stakeholders, otherwise known as your **windows of opportunity**.

Important processes and events can provide windows of opportunity to highlight and generate interest in your research and encourage use of your findings. To benefit from these opportunities, you need to know when they are happening, who is involved, and how best to influence key participants and capitalize on the process or event. Some potential windows of opportunity include:

* Budget processes: Influence what gets funded and how much funding is allocated.
* Strategic planning: Influence strategic priorities, national and subnational plans, and key commitments.
* Program planning: Influence the design of future projects and adaptations to existing ones.
* Policy processes: Influence policy formation and implementation.
* Communication opportunities: Influence events and discussions around international days of recognition.

To identify when your research has the best chance to get stakeholders’ attention and when they are most likely to act on it—your windows of opportunity—consider these processes and the primary stakeholder you identified in Section 4.

INSTRUCTIONS

[ ]  **Work with your research team to brainstorm windows of opportunity for your research to influence decision-making in the following areas:**

* Budget processes: [Type here…]
* Strategic planning: [Type here…]
* Program planning: [Type here…]
* Policy processes: [Type here…]
* Communication opportunities: [Type here…]
* Other windows of opportunity: [Type here…]

[>> Jump to the R2A Plan Template to fill in the Windows of Opportunity](#TemplateWIndowsOfOpportunity)

Section 6. Create Main Messages and Develop Actionable Recommendations

OVERVIEW

You want your target stakeholders to understand the importance of the information you share with them so that they will take the action you intend. For this reason, your messages and how they are delivered must be tailored with the stakeholders’ interests in mind. It may be obvious to you why your research is important, but this value is not always immediately apparent to others.

Use your research results and other evidence to tell a story by sharing:

* Data and information (findings)
* Reasons the data and information matter (implications)
* Actions that need to be taken (recommendations)

Your stakeholders should be able to easily understand the story by reading the main messages you develop.

INSTRUCTIONS

[ ]  **Consider how your findings (and associated implications and recommendations) could be used to achieve your R2A goals and objectives.** To develop your main messages, you must consider your findings, tease out the implications of those findings, and identify your key recommendations. The main message tells a story, and each R2A goal requires a main message.

**Findings**What is the problem? What are the main findings? What are the facts? Select the data that has policy or program relevance and ties back to your primary stakeholders, R2A goals, and objectives.

*Example: “When given access to land and agricultural skills, rural women and adolescent girls improve household food security by at least 10 percent.”*

* Finding #1: [Type here…]
* Finding #2: [Type here…]
* Finding #3: [Type here…]

**Implications**What are the implications of the findings, and why are they important to your primary and secondary stakeholders? Implications answer the question, “so what?”

*Example: “Increasing household food security can have many positive effects on people and communities, including helping people avoid hunger and malnutrition, reducing poverty, and helping families and children thrive at home, at school, at work, and in their communities.”*

* Implication #1: [Type here…]
* Implication #2: [Type here…]
* Implication #3: [Type here…]

**Recommendations**What actions should be taken, and by which stakeholders? Remember to make recommendations SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound).

*Example: “The Ministry of Agriculture should include the provision of financial resources via land and agricultural trainings to women and adolescent girls in the 2024-2025 budget planning process.”*

* Recommendation #1: [Type here…]
* Recommendation #2: [Type here…]
* Recommendation #3: [Type here…]

**Drafting Main Message**Use the findings, implications, and recommended actions you identified above to draft your main message here. A main message can consist of one finding, one implication, and one recommendation or more than one of each—just make sure to have a main message for each R2A goal. A reminder that in each main message, your finding(s) lead to your implication(s) which in turn lead to your recommendation(s).

*Example: “Research in Kabale, Uganda shows that when rural women and adolescent girls are given access to land and agricultural skills, household food security improves by at least 10 percent. Increasing food security in households can have many positive effects on people and communities, including helping people avoid hunger and malnutrition, reducing poverty, and helping families and children thrive at home, at school, at work, and in their communities. Outside of the household, food security can also help stabilize the economy and reduce climate problems. To encourage this progress in other districts in Uganda, the Ministry of Agriculture should create a training curriculum to boost women’s and girls’ agricultural skills and raise awareness of available land grants in the 2024-2025 budget planning process.”*

[Type main message here…]

[>> Jump to the R2A Plan Template to fill in your Main Messages](#Template3SMainMessages)

Section 7. Package Research in Appropriate, User-Friendly Formats and Disseminate

OVERVIEW

Once you develop your main messages, you can begin to develop products that communicate your research to different audiences in an accessible, compelling way. Communicating your findings in user-friendly formats can help you explain your research to non-technical audiences, persuade audiences to change their mind on your research topic, and motivate audiences to take specific evidence-based recommendations. These products can be readily used to inform policies, programs, or practices and advance your R2A goals and objectives.

STEP 1: REVISIT R2A Goals and OBJECTIVES

INSTRUCTIONS

As you begin to package your research in appropriate, user-friendly formats, you will want to revisit the R2A goals and objectives that you developed earlier in [Section 2](#Section2) and [Section 3](#Section3). Revisiting your R2A goals and objectives will make it easier to select the audience and format of your product.

[ ]  **Review the R2A goal(s) and objective(s) you developed in Section 2 and 3.**

STEP 2: IDENTIFY target AUDIENCES

Your target audience is the intended recipient of your communication product. Identifying a specific audience helps shape the product’s content, language, and format, thereby making it more effective. Your target audience for a communication product will likely be one of the primary stakeholders you identified in [Section 4](#Section4).

INSTRUCTIONS

[ ]  **From your list in Section 4, identify the target audience for your communication product.**
*Example: If your R2A objective is to persuade the Ministry of Agriculture to develop an agricultural skills training curriculum that targets women and girls, your target audience will likely be the Ministry of Agriculture or other program officers or policymakers that influence curriculum design.*

[Type target audience here…]

STEP 3: PRODUCT SELECTION

Think carefully about which product formats will be most appropriate, given your R2A goals/objectives and target audiences. Different audiences may prefer different products with varying levels of detail and technical content. For example, if you want to reach the general public, you might lean toward awareness-raising products, such as a news article or social media post. Policymakers may need to be persuaded, in which case products like policy briefs and factsheets may work best.

INSTRUCTIONS

[ ]  **Select what type of user-friendly print or digital products would be helpful in reaching your target audiences.**

[ ]  Blog or op-ed
*(a web piece that is written in an informal or conversational style)*

[ ]  Policy brief
*(short document that summarizes research and makes recommendations to help readers understand and make decisions about government policies)*

[ ]  Factsheet
*(similar to a policy brief with findings and recommendations, but more concise, using fewer paragraphs of text and more visuals)*

[ ]  Infographic
*(visual representation of information or data intended to present information quickly and clearly)*

[ ]  Interactive web feature
*(a website that communicates efficiently and provides interactive web user experiences)*

[ ]  Report
*(document that summarizes the findings of a research project, including the processes, data, and analysis used to reach those findings)*

[ ]  Short video
*(a three- to five-minute video that shares key messages and recommendations)*

[ ]  Slide deck
*(a PowerPoint presentation that shares key messages and recommendations)*

[ ]  Other: [Type here…]

[ ]  **Choose your user-friendly product.** After completing the prior steps, identify the communication product(s) that would fit best with your R2A objective(s) and the identified audiences.

*Example: A factsheet may be a useful product for sharing your research findings and policy recommendations with the Ministry of Agriculture because your R2A objective is to introduce a new curriculum, and a factsheet’s combination of design and text is useful for decision-makers with limited time*.

[Type products and audiences here…]

[>> Jump to the R2A Plan Template to fill in your Communication Products](#Template4CommunicationsProducts)

USING ACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE

Accessible language ensures that your audiences can clearly understand your key messages. One way to make writing and communication familiar and accessible is to use a conversational writing style. Conversational writing can be understood by everyone, including those outside of your field or technical area. This differs from a technical writing style heavy in jargon that would only be used by experts, researchers, or those in your field.

A conversational writing style has two key qualities:

1. Conversational writing is easy to read and process. The reader can readily understand the narrative and follow it as the story unfolds. When readers can more easily read and understand your writing, they are more engaged with it.
2. Conversational writing is also easy to remember and makes an impact on the reader. Because the material is easy to read and understand, readers are more likely to remember key points later.

Conversational writing limits the use of long, complicated sentences or jargon-heavy passages. Some recommendations for crafting accessible communication include:

* Pay close attention to the words you choose:
	+ Use words that are more concrete than abstract.
	+ Use conversational words.
	+ Use short, jargon-free sentences.
	+ Avoid using the passive voice.
* Choose descriptive titles, headings, and subheadings:
	+ Use descriptive titles, headings, and subheadings to optimize space, communicate specific details to the reader, and emphasize each section’s main points.
* Enhance clarity and credibility:
	+ Use acronyms sparingly.
	+ Define technical terms clearly at first use. Remember that terms that are commonly known in your field may not be known to your primary stakeholder.

DISSEMINATING MAIN MESSAGES AND PRODUCTS THROUGH MULTIPLE CHANNELS

Think about how you will share your messages and selected user-friendly communication products through specific channels to reach your target audiences. Match communication efforts with the windows of opportunity you identified in [Section 5](#Section5).

INSTRUCTIONS

[ ]  **Complete the table below by filling in possible opportunities to share your research findings based on your targeted stakeholders and an assessment of the policy environment.**

|  |
| --- |
| **Disseminating Your User-Friendly Communication Materials** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Audience** | **Type of Dissemination** | **Reach** |
| Key: | *e.g., policymakers, scientific community, public* | *e.g., presentation, fact sheet, infographic* | *e.g., global, regional, national, subnational, local* |

Conferences and Events

*e.g., International Conference on Family Planning*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Audience** | **Type of Dissemination**  | **Reach**  |
| [Conference Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Conference Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Conference Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |

Project-Organized Virtual or In-Person Events

*e.g., Hosting a webinar or holding a series of strategic meetings with primary and secondary stakeholders*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Audience** | **Type of Dissemination**  | **Reach**  |
| [Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |

Digital Dissemination

*e.g., posting to project website, emailing listservs, implementing a social media campaign*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Audience** | **Type of Dissemination**  | **Reach**  |
| [Digital Product/Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Digital Product/Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Digital Product/Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |

Media

*e.g., contacting journalists, writing press releases, inviting media to events*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Audience** | **Type of Dissemination**  | **Reach**  |
| [Media Product/Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Media Product/Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Media Product/Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |

Other

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Audience** | **Type of Dissemination**  | **Reach**  |
| [Product/Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Product/Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Product/Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |

[>> Jump to the R2A Plan Template to fill in your Dissemination Methods](#Template5DisseminationOptions)

Section 8. Develop a Research-to-Action Plan Timeline

OVERVIEW

It is important to plan and organize activities in ways that align to your R2A goals and objectives, as well as to assign your research team specific roles and identify the time period in which this work should occur.

When developing a timeline for your R2A plan, think about implementation of all of your activities throughout the stages of research. Your team needs to consider:

* What major steps remain to be completed in the research project?
* What strategic opportunities exist to share your research and when do they occur?
* How much time do you need to prepare for each step?
* How else might this research be used, and who else might have an interest in it?

INSTRUCTIONS

[ ]  **List each major activity you will need to implement throughout the stages of research to achieve your R2A goal(s) and objective(s).** *Tip: For more complex activities, it can help to include any subtasks needed to implement the activity.*

We encourage you to maintain a task list and timeline in whatever format works best for your team. Some teams like to use a spreadsheet with a row for each task and columns for the months of the year. Some also add rows or columns to identify a responsible team member or note inputs that are required for the task to be completed. The goal is to make note of major tasks to be completed, resources needed, and the person responsible for each activity or sub-activity, along with the timeframe during which your team will conduct the activity.

**Major Activities**

* [Type activity here…]
* [Type activity here…]
* [Type activity here…]
* [Type activity here…]
* [Type activity here…]
* [Type activity here…]
* [Type activity here…]

[>> Jump to the R2A Plan Template to fill in your R2A Timeline section](#Template6Timeline)

Section 9. Regularly Track Progress and Measure Success

OVERVIEW

After going through the sections of this R2A Plan Guide, it is helpful to develop outputs, outcomes, and impacts to assess whether you are reaching your R2A goals and objectives. **Outputs** are the immediate effects of your activities or the direct products/deliverables of your activities; they are immediate, and tangible. **Outcomes** are the likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an activity’s outputs. **Impact** is your R2A objectives or goals being achieved, or larger social and economic change.

Identifying outputs, outcomes, and impacts will help you track your progress and understand whether your approach to targeting primary stakeholders has worked. If not, this learning process can—and likely should—inform updating your original R2A plan.

*Examples:*

* *Outputs: Meetings with Ministry of Agricultural officials held, written commitment from officials to discuss further.*
* *Short-term outcomes: Ministry of Agriculture develops an agriculture skills training curriculum targeting women and girls.*
* *Long-term impact: Proportion of rural women and adolescent girls with access to land and agricultural skills increased.*

INSTRUCTIONS

[ ]  **Consider what results (outputs, outcomes) may indicate completion of the activity or progress toward achieving your R2A goals and objectives.** What outputs or outcomes would show that you succeeded in getting your research evidence used in some way? Fill in your considerations below and make sure to update this as you move through your research-to-action journey.

**Checkpoint #1**

Date of checkpoint: [Type here…]

What has been going well so far? [Type here…]

What have we achieved towards our R2A goals (outputs, outcomes, impact)? [Type here…]

What needs to be changed or improved going forward: [Type here…]

**Checkpoint #2**

Date of checkpoint: [Type here…]

What has been going well so far? [Type here…]

What have we achieved towards our R2A goals (outputs, outcomes, impact)? [Type here…]

What needs to be changed or improved going forward? [Type here…]

**Checkpoint #3**

Name: [Type here…]

Outputs: [Type here…]

Short-term outcomes: [Type here…]

Long-term outcomes or impact: [Type here…]

[>> Jump to the R2A Plan Template to fill in your Tracking Progress section](#Template7TrackProgress)

[Disclaimer](#Template7TrackProgress)

[The Research Technical Assistance Center (RTAC) is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of contract no. 7200AA18C00057. This Research-to-Action Guide and Template was produced by Population Reference Bureau and is the sole responsibility of RTAC and NORC at the University of Chicago, and does not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.](#Template7TrackProgress)

**R2A Plan Template** 

INSTRUCTIONS

[ ]  **Fill out the R2A Plan Template found on the following pages.**

Research-to-Action Plan

ABOUT

Date of latest update: [Date]

Point of contact: [Name, email]

[NAME OF RESEARCH PROJECT]

**Institution:** [Name of University, etc.]

Principal Investigators:

* [Name, Title, Institution]
* [Name, Title, Institution]

Additional Team Members:

* [Name, Title, Institution]
* [Name, Title, Institution]

Brief Description of Research:

* Purpose: [Type here…]
* Methodology: [Type here…]
* Main results: [Type here…]
* General project timeline: [Type here…]
* Additional information including links to papers or websites as applicable: [Type here…]

Research-to-Action Goals and Objectives

1. [R2A goal 1]
2. [R2A objective]
3. [R2A objective—optional]
4. [R2A goal 2—optional]
5. [R2A objective]
6. [R2A objective—optional]

Stakeholders

All Stakeholders:

* [Stakeholder]
* [Stakeholder]
* [Stakeholder]
* [Stakeholder]
* [Stakeholder]
* [Stakeholder]
* [Stakeholder]
* [Stakeholder]
* [Stakeholder]
* [Stakeholder]
* [Stakeholder]
* [Stakeholder]
* [Stakeholder]
* [Stakeholder]

Stakeholder Engagement:

* [Stage where you engaged or plan to engage stakeholders during the implementation of this R2A Plan]
* [Stage where you engaged or plan to engage stakeholders during the implementation of this R2A Plan]
* [Stage where you engaged or plan to engage stakeholders during the implementation of this R2A Plan]
* [Stage where you engaged or plan to engage stakeholders during the implementation of this R2A Plan]
* [Stage where you engaged or plan to engage stakeholders during the implementation of this R2A Plan]
* [Stage where you engaged or plan to engage stakeholders during the implementation of this R2A Plan]

Primary Stakeholders:

* [Primary stakeholder 1]
	+ [Reason for prioritizing this stakeholder]
* [Primary stakeholder 2]
	+ [Reason for prioritizing this stakeholder]

Secondary Stakeholders:

* [Secondary stakeholder 1]
	+ [Reason for prioritizing this stakeholder]
* [Secondary stakeholder 2]
	+ [Reason for prioritizing this stakeholder]
* [Secondary stakeholder 3]
	+ [Reason for prioritizing this stakeholder]

**Stakeholders to Engage in the Next Six Months**

* [Stakeholder 1 Name]
	+ Title: [Type here…]
	+ Organization: [Type here…]
	+ Relevance: [Type here…]
* [Stakeholder 2 Name]
	+ Title: [Type here…]
	+ Organization: [Type here…]
	+ Relevance: [Type here…]
* [Stakeholder 3 Name]
	+ Title: [Type here…]
	+ Organization: [Type here…]
	+ Relevance: [Type here…]

Windows of Opportunity

* [Window of opportunity 1]
	+ [Date/date range]
	+ [Brief description]
* [Window of opportunity 2]
	+ [Date/date range]
	+ [Brief description]
* [Window of opportunity 3]
	+ [Date/date range]
	+ [Brief description]
* [Window of opportunity 4]
	+ [Date/date range]
	+ [Brief description]

Main Messages

Main Message 1:

* Finding: [A key result of your research]
* Implication: [The “so what?” stemming from the finding]
* Recommendation: [A recommended action for stakeholders to take to achieve your R2A goal]
* Main message: [The above three bullets synthesized into a short, jargon-free message]

Main Message 2:

* Finding: [A key result of your research]
* Implication: [The “so what?” stemming from the finding]
* Recommendation: [A recommended action for stakeholders to take to achieve your R2A goal]
* Main message: [The above three bullets synthesized into a short, jargon-free message]

Communication Products

Communication Product 1:

* Type of product: [Type here…]
* Target audience: [Type here…]
* Plan for creating this product: [Type here…]
* Link to this product once it is created: [Type here…]

Communication Product 2 (optional):

* Type of product: [Type here…]
* Target audience: [Type here…]
* Plan for creating this product: [Type here…]
* Link to this product once it is created: [Type here…]

Dissemination Options

|  |
| --- |
| **Disseminating Your User-Friendly Communication Materials** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Audience** | **Type of Dissemination** | **Reach** |
|  | *e.g., policymakers, scientific community, public* | *e.g., presentation, factsheet, infographic* | *e.g., global, regional, national, subnational, local* |

**Conferences and Events**

*e.g., International Conference on Family Planning*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Audience** | **Type of Dissemination**  | **Reach**  |
| [Conference Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Conference Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Conference Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |

**Project-Organized Virtual or In-Person Events**

*e.g., Hosting a webinar or holding a series of strategic meetings with primary and secondary stakeholders*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Audience** | **Type of Dissemination**  | **Reach**  |
| [Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |

**Digital Dissemination**

*e.g., posting to project website, emailing listservs, implementing a social media campaign*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Audience** | **Type of Dissemination**  | **Reach**  |
| [Digital Product/Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Digital Product/Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Digital Product/Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |

**Media**

*e.g., contacting journalists, writing press releases, inviting media to events*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Audience** | **Type of Dissemination**  | **Reach**  |
| [Media Product/Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Media Product/Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Media Product/Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |

**Other**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Audience** | **Type of Dissemination**  | **Reach**  |
| [Product/Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Product/Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |
| [Product/Event Name] | [Audience] | [Type of Dissemination] | [Reach] |

Research-to-Action Plan Timeline

*Note: You may wish to do this in a separate document, such as a spreadsheet, and link to the document here.*

|  |
| --- |
| **Research-to-Action Plan Timeline** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Activity** | **Action(s)** | **Person(s) Responsible** | **Objective** |
| *e.g., Jan 5, 2025* | *e.g., Brainstorming meeting to identify and prioritize stakeholders* | *e.g., Book room, send out invites and agenda to participants* | *e.g., Full research team; facilitated by Dr. Pancake* | *e.g., Come to a consensus on which stakeholders we will interview in the next three months* |
| [Date] | [Activity] | [Action] | [Person] | [Objective] |
| [Date] | [Activity] | [Action] | [Person] | [Objective] |
| [Date] | [Activity] | [Action] | [Person] | [Objective] |
| [Date] | [Activity] | [Action] | [Person] | [Objective] |
| [Date] | [Activity] | [Action] | [Person] | [Objective] |
| [Date] | [Activity] | [Action] | [Person] | [Objective] |
| [Date] | [Activity] | [Action] | [Person] | [Objective] |
| [Date] | [Activity] | [Action] | [Person] | [Objective] |
| [Date] | [Activity] | [Action] | [Person] | [Objective] |
| [Date] | [Activity] | [Action] | [Person] | [Objective] |

Tracking Progress and Measuring Success

Progress Items to Track:

*Note: You may track these items in this document, or in a separate document or spreadsheet and link it here.*

* Number of stakeholders reached: [Type here…]
* Names, organizations, and dates of outreach to stakeholders: [Type here…]
* Synthesized results of stakeholder interviews: [Type here…]
* Number and types of communication products distributed: [Type here…]
* Events at which outreach takes place: [Type here…]
* Program or policy changes made as a result of this R2A plan: [Type here…]

Periodic Reviews:

Checkpoint #1

* Date of checkpoint: [Type here…]
* What has been going well so far? [Type here…]
* What have we achieved towards our R2A goals (outputs, outcomes, impact)? [Type here…]
* What needs to be changed or improved going forward? [Type here…]

Checkpoint #2

* Date of checkpoint: [Type here…]
* What has been going well so far? [Type here…]
* What have we achieved towards our R2A goals (outputs, outcomes, impact)? [Type here…]
* What needs to be changed or improved going forward? [Type here…]