



## PLANNING FOR IMPACT

Research impact is at times difficult to assess and measure because of the complexity and diversity of impacts that can become manifest throughout the life-cycle of a research project, as well as the issue of variability in time elapsed between project completion and impact realization. Researchers should therefore be proactive in thinking about and planning for impact very early in the project cycle.

### DEFINITION OF IMPACT

**Impact can be defined as the demonstrable academic, economic, social, environmental and/or cultural benefits to specific groups in society emanating from research activity.**

### TYPES OF IMPACT

RDI Fund projects are expected to demonstrate **academic** as well as **non - academic** impacts which can be further categorized as:

- ❖ Influential – contributing to behavioral change
- ❖ Conceptual – contributing to understanding
- ❖ Capacity Building – contributing to skill development

Examples of specific impacts include:

- New or improved product(s), processes and/or service(s)
- The use of a project's output by a commercial or industrial enterprise or other stakeholder group
- The award of a patent
- A resultant change in public sector policy
- The solution of a problem of economic, social, political or cultural significance
- Generation of new knowledge for research
- Strengthening communities of practice
- Helping a stakeholder community to become more organized and engaged
- A recognized contribution to intellectual discourse
- Attracting additional external funding to support a cause

### WHY IS IMPACT IMPORTANT?

**Research Impact is important as the UWI seeks to:**

- ❖ Fulfill our strategic mission
- ❖ Increase recognition of UWI research
- ❖ Increase competitiveness
- ❖ Carve out a unique space in Caribbean and global higher education
- ❖ Strengthen the linkages between academic output, policy and action
- ❖ Demonstrate more clearly the benefits and value of investing in research

### STRATEGIZING FOR IMPACT

**It is important that even before implementation of a project begins, researchers conceptualize a strategic pathway to achieving impact.**

- ❖ Identify and prioritize stakeholders
- ❖ Determine how each group will benefit from your research activities
- ❖ Ensure that there is two-way communication
- ❖ Plan how you will ensure that there are opportunities for each to benefit
- ❖ Where possible, assign a team member to focus on tracking opportunities for and achievement of impact, documenting and communicating these to relevant stakeholders



## PLANNING FOR IMPACT

At various stages of the project cycle, try to ascertain who can potentially benefit from the research activity being carried out and put measures in place to increase the likelihood of reaching your beneficiaries. An impact plan should be highly project specific.

In developing an impact plan, remember to:

- Set SMART objectives - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
- Develop your research message
- Identify target audiences
- Plan tailored activities and knowledge exchange
- Set clear deliverables and milestones

This is not an exercise in trying to predict impact. Rather, it is about anticipating and preparing for opportunities which, once seized, will highlight the value and benefits of the project to stakeholders groups.

