

Research Transfer toolkit

Making sure your project has an impact

These questions have been prepared as a guide to help project teams think about the development of research transfer plans as required in the CRCAH Statement of Responsibilities (the legal document which formalises the CRCAH's funding of a project). It will be most useful if you can be as specific as possible.

Think through these questions – or better still work through them with the whole project team - and try to fill out the research transfer template attached.

If you would like more information about planning for outcomes and research transfer, please contact Jenny Brands on jenny.brands@crcah.org.au or phone 0409 284066.

1. **What is this project trying to achieve?** What do you hope will happen as a result of it? Is it likely to have an impact on health service provision, health professionals' practice, policy and funding allocations, treatment options, building capacity, or informing healthy behaviour?
2. **Who are the potential users of the outcomes or learnings from the project?** Evidence shows that the involvement of potential users in the planning, conduct and dissemination of projects is likely to assist the uptake of research. How have these stakeholder groups been involved in the project? How might they be involved? Who might need to be influenced in order to get the findings used?
3. **How does this project relate to other current research work or trends in policy and practice?** Policy makers for example prefer to engage with a synthesis of knowledge rather than one off project reports. If the findings of this project proposes radically new treatment options, you may anticipate some nervousness from potential users. One of the biggest challenges to research transfer is that users will adopt research findings most easily if the findings match their own preconceived beliefs or 'common sense' understandings – and be very slow to adopt any findings that don't. Just consider political and voter attitudes towards imprisonment for crime.
4. **How can you try to ensure your project achieves an impact?** Involving potential users is one way. You also need to make sure that the ways you try to communicate with different potential users is suitable for their needs. For example, doctors prefer to receive advice about professional practice from other doctors with expert standing. Translating research findings into changes in a health policy may require the production of briefing notes, meetings with politicians and public servants, and an action-learning approach to implement the change at the level of service provision. The CRCAH Knowledge

Translation Dissemination and Communication Coordinator can help advise on effective strategies for different groups of users.

5. **What are the risks to successful research transfer for this project?** Think about the potential barriers to research transfer relevant to your project. Barriers might include a hostile political climate, or language and cultural differences between researchers, policy makers and community members. One of the biggest risks is a communication break down or rivalry and power struggles within the project team. Think about how to manage these risk factors.
6. **What are the opportunities which exist around this project to facilitate research transfer?** One of the strongest facilitating factors is the deep desire of health care professionals to help people improve their health. A favourable political climate or a health care crisis (like SARS for instance) can also make possible opportunities for research uptake which might otherwise take years.
7. **Can capacity development be an outcome of this project?** Research is a capacity developing activity – by planning carefully you can maximize the opportunities for capacity development for project team members, participants, organizations and communities. See also the toolkit for Capacity Development.
8. **What are the dissemination and publication requirements for this project?** For example, will it require the publication of a report, a journal article, the production of a video, a series of workshops or a media campaign?
9. **How have/will you provide feedback to community organisations or members who participated in the research?** This is one of the most sensitive areas in Aboriginal health research because in the past researchers often did not report back to communities and were seen to be taking community knowledge and giving nothing back. Yet effective engagement with communities and participants is also one of the richest potential areas of learning. Again, the Dissemination and Communications Coordinator can provide advice on effective strategies.
10. **How much will all this cost? Make sure you budget for research transfer.** Effective strategies for research transfer are likely to cost money, and are also very likely to take considerable time to make sure they work. In the commercial world, more than 50% of a product development budget will be spent on marketing and education to get the product ‘transferred’ into use. Without effective planning and budgeting for research transfer, all your hard work and commitment in doing the research may be in vain.

Template for Research Transfer Planning¹

Outcome, step towards outcomes or phase of project	Who involved? Who needs to be influenced?	Communications or transfer issues – barriers and challenges	Strategies	Tools/resources needed

¹ You may wish to look at the sample research transfer plans attached.

Sample Research Transfer Plan

Outcome, step towards outcome or phase of project	Who involved?	Communications or transfer barriers and opportunities	Strategies	Tools/resources needed
Communities agree to involvement	Community Councils Health centres Others?	Need to explain the story of this disease Need to tell success story of Community A Communities need time to consider and take on issue themselves	Researchers to visit each community. Community B as potential example ?	Simple easy to read flipchart, possibly A3, based on existing flipcharts but even simplified, use graphic images, babies graph, tell Community A story in pictures?
Individuals, families and children consent to involvement	Communities which have agreed to take part.	Individuals need good understanding of what is going on.	Visits to each house ? Possibilities of using video or Imparja community service ads ?	Flipchart – which can be left with households?
Employment of staff	Community based project officers	Getting staff on board with project aims, methods, skills etc.	Draw up capacity development plan.	
Doing of actual intervention and other steps before and after				
Feedback about project results	Communities, Govt service staff involved			
Govt service to pick up approach if it is effective	Govt service policy makers	Needs health service manager A's input	Govt service involvement in project planning and conduct. Include economic assessment in project.	Briefing paper for government and public service. Organise briefing.
Dissemination to broader academic audience	Researchers	Government agency involvement may lead to criticisms of co-option	Ensure transparency of project rigour. Conference presentations, peer review journal publication.	Capacity devt in conference presentation (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal presenters). Power point presentation.

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Dissemination Planning Template

This template is for use as you start to have a clearer idea of what the project findings are. At this point you can plan make a detailed dissemination plan. However you should not leave this planning till the end of the project or you may not have any money left to spend on it. Think about potential dissemination strategies when planning your project.

Implications of the findings and potential strategies:

Finding	Stakeholder /audience	Implication	Transfer strategy

Proposed publications for production and estimated costs:

List here

Sample Dissemination Plan

Prepared for CRCAH/NICS Research Transfer project - Research transfer planning

Implications of the findings and potential strategies:

Finding	Stakeholder /audience	Implication	Transfer strategy
Importance of how research projects begin and are shaped (ie stakeholder involvement in initiation, planning and conduct; having a strong outcomes focus; transfer thinking from outset; targeting multiple levels eg policy, service provision, behaviour, capacity).	CRCAH	How can the CRC establish systems and processes to ensure projects are initiated and shaped to achieve maximum effect? Developing process for engagement at Theme level; Ensuring strong stakeholder involvement at priority setting stage; Direction of resources towards Strategic Devt pathway – stakeholder/community initiated Encouraging research conscious culture in stakeholders.	Detailed discussion of findings with Executive Board? Theme Leaders? Function leaders and other Devt Div reps?
	Policy/service stakeholders	The importance of an evidence conscious culture and how to engage in/initiate/use research to best effect. Role of champion-advocate Issues around implementation beyond the transfer to policy.	One pager specific to each stakeholder group summarising findings + meetings, presentation or workshop to talk about the findings. Longer term action research type project to engage around these issues (perhaps collaboration to engage stakeholder with research more systemically; incorporating research transfer awareness/culture building around a project?)
	Researchers	How to engage with stakeholders at project initiation stage and during conduct of the project. How to plan projects which will ‘make a difference’.	Awareness raising workshops Engagement in project development process with advice and facilitation. Research transfer toolkit.

Finding	Stakeholder /audience	Implication	Transfer strategy
Potential for knowledge brokering activities to influence improved health outcomes.	CRCAH	What systemic support will be required for knowledge brokering to make it effective? Is the CRC appropriate to/prepared to provide this?	
To ensure its effectiveness, research transfer needs itself to be evidence based.	CRCAH/ NICS	How can the CRC document project initiation and research transfer activity? Developing ongoing processes of learning and evaluation to ensure continued improvement. Establish evidence basis around theories of change (behaviour, systems, diffusion of innovations etc) Further research on transfer at implementation stage.	Inclusion of reporting requirements in SPR and monitoring and evaluation requirements. Inclusion of research transfer in Researching Research project. Seek project funding or research collaborations to carry out research to fill gaps

Proposed publications:

- Complete research report (containing process and findings) – distributed to CRCAH and NICS Board members and Executive; Program leaders and Link Contact people? Function coordinators; SME Forum 1 copy.
- Case studies and findings – more readable publication. Process summarised in appendix. (Approx \$5500)
- 1-2 page summaries of findings and implications for specific stakeholder groups
- Powerpoint presentations for specific stakeholder/workshop audiences
- Thinking Beyond the Project publications on Planning for Research that Makes a Difference; Working in Partnership; Continuum of Research Transfer (approx \$4500)

