

Research Decision Making Guide



As Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, organisations and Nations, we have the right to engage with and lead research, program evaluation and continuous quality improvement in a way that meets our needs and aspirations. This decision making framework has questions to consider and ask to support the research planning process, identify success factors and direct you to other resources that can assist. You may also want to move back and forward at different times to keep yourself on track and remind you of your intended outcomes and benefits.

Purpose

What outcome do you want?



- Does it align to your organisation, community and/or Nation's strategic direction?
- Does the proposal address your organisation, community and/or Nation's priorities and needs?
- Does the proposal comply with your organisation, community and/or Nation's ways of knowing, being and doing?
- Does it align to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ethical principles?
- Has an agreement that outlines data governance, Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) and ethics been developed in a way you understand and are comfortable with?



Meaningful

What is important to us? Is it meaningful?



- Is it meaningful to your organisation, community and/or Nation?
- Will it contribute to making a difference for your organisation, community and/or Nation? This could be to better understand needs, strengthen services and improve outcomes.
- Does it involve your organisation, community and/or Nation meaningfully in the research journey to ensure more accurate interpretation of the findings?
- Does it meaningfully consider your organisations, community and/or Nation's needs and perspectives?
- Is there meaningful engagement and leadership of the organisation, community and/or Nation within the process?

HELP **LEAD** MEANINGFUL **CHANGE**

Methodology

What will we measure and how will we work?



Is research needed, or is this an evaluation or continuous quality improvement process?

Do you have the skills, knowledges, and resources to do this yourself, or do you need to work with external parties?

Have you been provided with information on how the research or evaluation will be done?

For example:

- What is the research question being asked?
- What will be measured?
- What type of information will be collected?
- How will information be collected?
- How will information be analysed?

- How will knowledge exchange be built into the research?
- Will the the general rules for how research needs to be conducted in your community, organisation and Nation going to be followed (e.g., local and cultural protocols)?

Is your organisation, community and/or Nation provided with information and an explanation about the methodology used in the research project?

Is your community, organisation, and/or Nation given the opportunity to provide feedback on the appropriateness of the research agenda and methodology?

Is the research methodology culturally safe for your organisation, community and/or Nation?

Are there opportunities for your community, organisation and Nation to express concerns and address issues along the research journey?

Are your interests, experiences, and knowledges at the centre of how it is proposed that things will be done?

Will your participation support you to do your own research in the future?

Indigenous Data governance

What are the protocols and principles that are followed?



Does the research or evaluation include Indigenous data governance? In other words, does your community, organisation or Nation have decision making authority over the data? For example:

- The power to decide what , how and when Indigenous data are gathered, analysed, accessed and used.
- The right to collect data that reflects your priorities, values and culture.

Do the researchers demonstrate how Indigenous Data governance protocols and principles will be followed in the research journey, for example practices related to:

- Control of the data - including creation, development, stewardship, analysis and dissemination.
- Data that is relevant and empowers sustainable self-determination and effective self-governance.
- Data structures that are accountable.
- Data that is protective of and respects your interests.

Does the agreement outline your community, organisation and/or Nation's right to assert ownership and control of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights?

Is your community, organisation and/or Nation ready to agree to:

- How the data will be stored?
- How the data may be used in the future?
- Who may use the data?
- Who is the contact for this?
- Who owns the data?

Knowledge translation

How will we use what we learn in a meaningful way?



Will your community, organisation and/or Nation receive regular communication updates from the research team?

Is your community, organisation and/or Nation aware of how the results will be reported and/or published?

Is your community, organisation and/or Nation aware of how the findings and outcomes from the project will be translated into policy, practice and/or service delivery?

Will your community, organisation and or/Nation be given recognition for your contributions, for example the option to co-author published works and co-deliver presentations in public forums?

Will your community, organisation or Nation be involved in developing the design, structure and drafting of any reports?

Are there any commitments made that extend beyond the completion of the research?

- If so, is your community, organisation and/or Nation comfortable with these commitments?
- If not, does community, organisation and/or Nation want to discuss what are appropriate commitments from the research team or from your community, organisation and/or Nation?

For more information on the topics raised in the guide, please see the Lowitja Institute's multimedia toolkit available [here](#).

For examples of decision making in practice see:

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 2018, [Keeping Research on Track II: A companion document to Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders](#), NHMRC, Canberra.

Laycock, A. with Walker, D., Harrison, N. & Brands, J. 2011, [Researching Indigenous Health: A Practical Guide for Researchers](#), The Lowitja Institute, Melbourne.

Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW 2015, [AH&MRC research assessment tools: tools for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services to support decision making about research requests](#), AH&MRC, Sydney.

For an example of a decision-making guide visit the Taungurung Land and Waters Council Decision-Making Guide 2019 available [here](#)

For an example of Indigenous Data Sovereignty Data for Governance visit the 2018 Indigenous Data Sovereignty Summit briefing paper available [here](#)



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