

SHARE YOUR SCIENCE – IMPACT STATEMENTS

WHAT IS AN IMPACT STATEMENT?

An impact statement is a brief summary that explains the economic, environmental, and/or social significance of your research efforts. It states accomplishments and their payoff to society by answering the questions:

- > So what?
- > Who cares?
- > Why is this important?

WHY WRITE IMPACT STATEMENTS?

Each year the U.S. Department of Agriculture requires land-grant universities to submit documentation of the impacts of our Research projects and Extension programs. These impact statements are shared with members of Congress and other key decision makers and can influence future agriculture, research and extension policy and funding decisions.

Impact statements are also used to share research and extension accomplishments with other stakeholders including taxpayers, current and potential funders, industry partners, and potential collaborators.

These audiences have:

- > Some influence and control over our funding and programs.
- > Have others competing for their attention and their funds.
- > Want information for decision-making.
- > Want quantifiable impacts to show for their investments in our programs.

IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE

To effectively communicate the impact of your research to funders, legislators, the public, or other stakeholders you need to know who your audience is, and what they want or need to know. Put yourself in their shoes and then tailor communications based on the group's interests. Members of the public are interested in how your research affects their lives, the lives of their family members and their communities. While your funders are usually interested in what has been accomplished with the funding they've invested in your research. An audience composed of industry partners may be interested in collaboration opportunities or the potential for commercialization or licensing of your research.



Legislators



Gov't Employees



Industry Partners



Funders



Producers



Scientists



Media



Consumers



Public



Voters

MAKE YOUR SCIENCE UNDERSTANDABLE

Don't overestimate how familiar your audience is with the topic of your impact statement or that the audience is familiar with jargon, acronyms, abbreviations, and technical terms used by scientists in your field. Use commonly understood terms when communicating to a nonscientific or stakeholder audience. If scientific terminology must be used, explain it in more commonly understood terms. See if a friend, family member, or colleague from a different discipline understands your explanation. It's better to use simple words and sentences to be sure that the reader understands the information being shared so they will be able to focus on the impact of your research.

THE RULE OF THREE

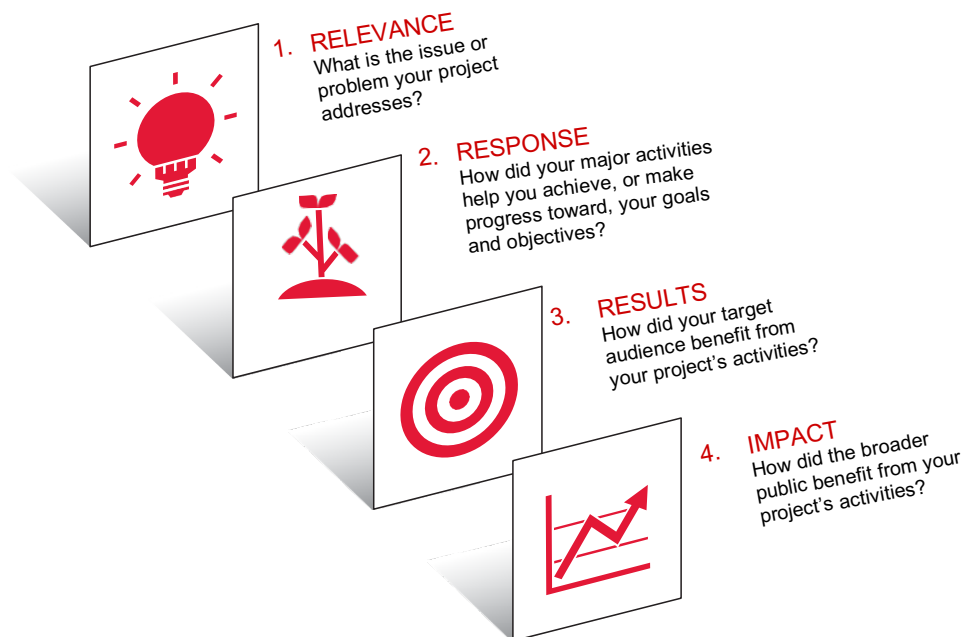
The third time's a charm, the three little pigs, rock paper scissors, or three guys walk into a bar... The rule of 3 suggests that when things come in threes, they are inherently funnier, more satisfying, or more effective than other numbers of things. Ideas are just more memorable when presented in threes. Effective science communication is no different. Use the rule of three to group your main ideas.

CONNECT WITH OUR MISSION, VISION, AND BRAND PROMISE

Research stories should always reflect our vision to create social and economic prosperity and well-being for the state, nation and world through agriculture and life science discovery, learning and engagement and leave the reader with the belief that our scientific breakthroughs translate into discoveries that will solve the nation's grand challenges. NC State's top competitive advantages that uniquely position us ahead of our peers:

- > Our extensive partnerships with business, industry and government generate a unique culture of collaboration to address the grand challenges of society.
- > Our cutting-edge, solution-driven research, technology and scholarship result in new ideas, products and services.
- > Our faculty, who are at the forefront of interdisciplinary innovation, lead extraordinary programs in learning and discovery.
- > Our students, faculty, staff and alumni create economic, societal and intellectual prosperity.
- > We solve global challenges and create economic, societal and intellectual prosperity by merging creative, innovative ideas with purposeful action.
- > We ask the big questions and deliver meaningful solutions.
- > Through our industry connections and commodity partners, we turn our discoveries into products and processes that shape how people feed, clothe, and heal themselves.
- > Our culture of innovation gives rise to unparalleled achievements and groundbreaking initiatives.

THE 4 QUESTIONS



SUBMITTING NIFA ANNUAL RESULTS IN NRS

TITLE

Title (175 characters)

The most effective titles are descriptive and briefly capture the significance of the results.

1. RELEVANCE

In 2-3 sentences briefly describe the issue or problem that your project addresses (8000 characters).

What is the issue, why is it an issue and for whom/what is it an issue? Explain the issue and its significance in non-technical terms. The issue paragraph is the attention-getter that makes people care about the research and recognize its importance.

- > Is the work connected to current issues/hot topics/grand challenges?
- > Was there something that prompted the need for this work – why is it necessary?
- > What is the public value of this research - why is the issue important?
- > What is the potential cost of ignoring the issue?
- > Who or what will benefit from solving the problem?
- > What is the magnitude of the problem?

2. RESPONSE

Briefly describe in non-technical terms how your major activities helped you achieve, or make significant progress toward, the goals and objectives described in your non-technical summary (8000 characters).

What was done? Describe major research and extension activities and who was involved. Share important and innovative tools, techniques, products, workshops, and other outputs. Your project outputs are what you did about the issue (your activities) that will lead to outcomes such as:

- > Activities: conducting and analyzing experiments or surveys; assessments; facilitating; teaching; or mentoring.
- > Events: conferences; demonstration sites; field days; tours; symposia; workshops; and trainings
- > Services: consulting; counseling; and tutoring.
- > Publications: journal articles; books; conference abstracts.
- > Other Scientific Products: methods, or techniques; data or databases; equipment or instruments; patents and patent applications; applications for Plant Variety Act protection; models; new germplasm, or genetic maps; decision support tools.

3. RESULTS

Briefly describe how your target audience benefited from your project's activities (8000 characters).

What was learned or produced? An outcome is defined as a measurable and documented change in knowledge, action, or condition as a result of the project. Outcomes relate directly to the project objectives and are supported with quantitative data.

- > Share anecdotes and success stories as examples.
- > Describe how findings, results, techniques that were developed or extended, or other products from the project made an impact or are likely to make an impact on the base of knowledge, theory, and research in the principal disciplinary field(s) of the project. Summarize using language that a lay audience can understand.
- > Refer to the project goal and objectives and the target audiences identified in your non-technical summary and the progress that has been made in accomplishing the outcomes and objectives.

4. IMPACT

Briefly describe how the broader public benefited from your project's activities (8000 characters).

This statement will be a primary tool for briefing leadership and legislators about what has been accomplished with the public funding invested in grant programs. Describe the public value of the project.

- > Describe ways in which the project made an impact, or is likely to make an impact, on commercial technology or public use, including: transfer of results to entities in government or industry; instances where the research has led to the initiation of a start-up company.
- > Describe how results from the project made an impact, or are likely to make an impact, beyond the bounds of science by improving social, economic, civic, or environmental conditions.
- > If your research has not yet realized tangible impact, you can report potential impact. Describe the ripple effect of small or early impacts.
- > The work you do in the lab or the field may be a step in solving a global problem. Relate your research to the bigger picture. Show how your work is playing a part in certain impacts.

5. COMMENTS

Optional. Describe and explain any major changes or problems encountered in approach, opportunities for training and professional development provided, how results have been disseminated to communities of interest, and new details regarding what the project plans to do during the next reporting period to accomplish the goals (8000 characters).

- > Publication information can be included in the additional comments section or anywhere within the narrative. Listing the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) and title is encouraged but not required.