

## 3. TYPES OF IMPACT



As with all SFI funding, SFI Discover has a strong interest in the impact of our funded projects. It is important when planning your education and public engagement (EPE) project to identify what you anticipate the project will achieve. Using a logic model will help you to do this. Impact has been described as “the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy”. SFI has identified a number of different types of impact, which you can read about here: <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-research-impact/impacts-and-outputs/types-of-impact.html>.

The types of impact that we feel are most likely to occur through EPE projects are:

### 1. SOCIETAL IMPACTS

These are impacts where the beneficiaries may include individuals, groups of individuals, organisations or communities whose quality of life, knowledge, behaviours, creative practices and other activities have been influenced positively. Examples include:

- improved public quality of life through changes in social equality, welfare or inclusion;
- stimulation or informing of public debate by research;
- stimulation of public interest and engagement in STEM, including through the enhancement of STEM-related education in schools; and,
- enhancement of the public's awareness, attitudes, education and understanding, by engaging them with research of social or cultural significance.

### 2. HEALTH IMPACTS

These are impacts where the beneficiaries may include individuals or groups whose health outcomes have been improved or whose quality of life has been enhanced (or potential harm mitigated) through the application of enhanced healthcare. This could apply specifically to EPE activities through:

- raising public awareness of a health risk or benefit.

### 3. IMPACTS ON PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Beneficiaries here may include organisations or individuals involved in the development and delivery of professional services, for example:

- changes to education or the school curriculum that have been informed by research.

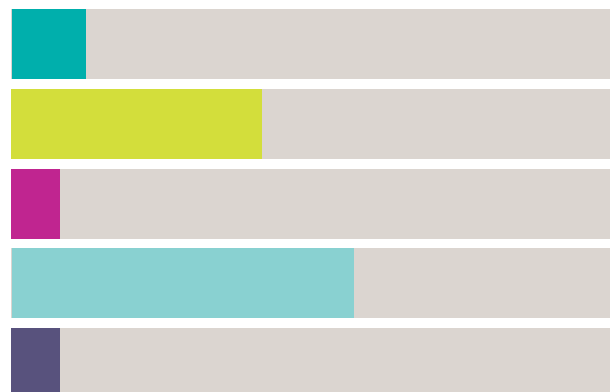
### LOGIC MODELS

It is important when planning your EPE project to identify the possible impacts that you anticipate. A useful tool to help identify a project's impacts is to use a logic model. A logic model demonstrates how an intervention (a project, programme, policy or strategy) is understood to contribute to possible or actual impacts. It can include both positive and negative impacts. Logic models can also identify other influences on these outcomes and impacts.

Logic models can be drawn in different ways. Sometimes they are shown as a series of boxes (inputs->processes->outputs->outcomes->impacts), sometimes in a table, and sometimes as a series of results, with activities occurring alongside them rather than just at the start.

Logic models can be developed before a programme starts, and used for planning, to develop monitoring systems, and for evaluation and reporting. They can also be developed during implementation and even after a programme has finished. A logic model can be used for a single evaluation. It can also be used to bring together evidence from multiple evaluations.

You can find more information on logic models and how to implement them here: <https://www.wkkf.org/resource-directory/resource/2006/02/wk-kellogg-foundation-logic-model-development-guide>.



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## HOW TO MEASURE IMPACT

There are various stages to an impact evaluation strategy:

### 1. Overarching aims:

What do you hope to achieve, e.g., raise awareness of research, increase numbers of students studying STEM, etc?

### 2. Objective:

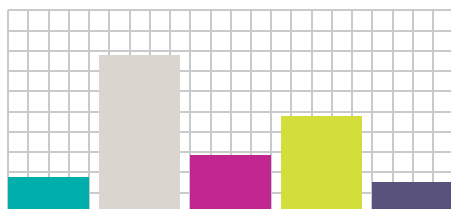
What do you need to do to achieve your aims? Make your objectives SMART: S(pecific) M(easurable) A(chievable) R(elevant) and T(ime limited) and think about what you can realistically achieve.

### 3. Evaluation questions:

These are the questions you want to answer. They are similar to research questions and they should relate to evidence that can be collected.

### 4. Methodology:

You may want to assess your audience to create a baseline before your activity and then see if there has been any change after your event. You can undertake ongoing evaluation to assess how successful your event is in engaging with your audience. This allows you to modify what you are doing. Longitudinal evaluation will assess whether the programme had long-term impacts, e.g., have any of the students who participated in your Transition Year work placement programme gone on to study STEM at third level? (See Part 5 of this toolkit for more information on methodologies.)



### 5. Data collection:

There are two main types of data collection methods – quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative methods use facts and figures and multiple choice responses, whereas qualitative methods ask what people thought. A mixed approach is recommended.

There are various data collection techniques that you can use, for example observation, face-to-face interviews, questionnaires (paper or online using programmes such as Survey Monkey), focus groups, and creative techniques such as art, video and drama (see Part 6 of this toolkit for more information about data collection).

### 6. Data analysis:

You need to consider how much raw data you plan to gather and how you will analyse the results. It is advisable to use a spreadsheet and, if possible, number all your responses. Open qualitative responses can be coded into common themes to make analysis easier (see Part 6).

### 7. Reporting:

When writing your report, think about the evidence you have collected: what it tells you and who is going to read your findings. Reflect on what have you learned from the experience. Write a clear and accessible report, including lessons learned.

Make judgments on what was successful and what was not, and how you might do things differently next time (see Part 7 of this toolkit for more information on reporting).

### 8. Result dissemination:

It is important to consider how you will share your results, both internally and externally.