

A quick guide to help you plan, write, and evidence your research impact in funding proposals. Use it when preparing the Impact or Pathways to Impact sections of a grant. It can also act as a practical checklist.

1. Start with the End in Mind

What change will your research make, and for whom? Think beyond academia. Be specific about who benefits and how their lives, practices, or environments could improve.

Example: “This project will help Irish food producers reduce antibiotic use through rapid diagnostics, improving sustainability and export readiness.”

2. Identify and Involve Stakeholders Early

Who do you need to engage to achieve this change? Identify relevant partners, involve them through co-design, and show how their feedback shapes the research.

Example: “An industry advisory group will guide test method development and validation.”

3. Describe the Pathway to Impact*

Stage	What it Means	Example
Inputs	Resources & expertise	Funding, data, lab facilities, people
Activities	What you do	Co-design, experiments, outreach
Outputs	Tangible products	Publications, tools, prototypes
Outcomes	Short-term changes	New practice, policy uptake
Impact	Long-term difference	Health improvement, economic growth

4. Show How You’ll Measure Success

Plan simple indicators (qualitative or quantitative) linked to your goals and engagement activities.

Examples: Policy brief cited in national strategy; Prototype adopted by industry partner; Increased engagement or awareness among target groups.

5. Align with Broader Priorities

Mention alignment with the [UN Sustainable Development Goals/Targets/Indicators](#), [National Research Priorities](#), or Enterprise Ireland / Horizon Europe themes.

Example: “Contributes to SDG 3.2.2 (Good Health & Well-being) by reducing neonatal mortality rates.”

6. Use Impact Language that Works*

Do use: enable, demonstrate, improve, translate, co-develop, inform, influence, embed.

Avoid: awareness raising, dissemination, generic ‘benefits to society.’ Reviewers prefer verbs that describe doing, not hoping.

7. Plan for Evidence and Follow-up

Include time and budget (where possible) for engagement and evaluation. Capture outputs and outcomes at milestones, and show intent to [share results beyond academia](#).

8. Common Reviewer Red Flags

- I. Vague statements (‘will have wide-reaching impact’)
- II. Impact appears only after project end, with no pathway
- III. No stakeholders or engagement plan
- IV. Over-claiming societal change without evidence

Fix these by being [concrete](#), [proportionate](#), and [linking to your project plan](#).

9. What next?

Review the [Research Impact Framework](#), [video guides](#), [case studies](#), and [practical tools](#) for planning, monitoring, and communicating impact by [visiting our office microsite](#).

Contact the Research Engagement & Impact Office: engagementandimpact@tudublin.ie

Tip: Reaching out early, while you’re still shaping your proposal, can help you align activities and partners for stronger, more credible impact pathways.

[*check out our worked examples and advice on answering funders impact questions under our “What Does Good Impact Writing Actually Look Like” section online.](#)