Fast Track Your Research Impact........................................................... Author: Mark Reed, Professor of Rural Entrepreneurship and Director of the Thriving Natural Capital Challenge Centre at Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC), and a Visiting Professor at Newcastle University, Birmingham City University and the University of Leeds

FIND OUT WHO’S INTERESTED

* Work out as early as possible who outside the academy is interested in your research and might benefit from it.
* If you can’t think of anyone, get help from someone who is better connected than you.
* If you have limited time, prioritise the most important organisations or groups, for example that are highly influential or vulnerable and hard-to-reach.

START WITH THEIR NEEDS RATHER THAN YOUR IDEAS

* Reach out to those you’ve prioritised, explaining how your work might address their interests or benefit them.
* Meet them in listening mode, putting yourself in their shoes to understand how they see the world.
* Work with them to make an impact plan that delivers clear benefits, with tailored activities and get their help to put it into action.

KEEP THEM ENGAGED

* Deliver quick wins, for example turning your literature review into a briefing note.
* Regularly get feedback on how the research is progressing and their priorities and contexts are changing, for example via a Stakeholder Advisory Panel.
* Co-design and produce events (e.g. industry workshops) and outputs (e.g. policy briefs) together, sharing resources so you can follow up with participants effectively.

LEARN ABOUT WHAT WORKS

* Remain curious about who has benefited and how, looking for unintended consequences, learning from mistakes and building on what works.
* Create a space where you and other team members can quickly and easily keep evidence of impacts e.g. an email folder, a shared online document or an app like Evernote or OneNote.
* For significant impacts, research your impact and provide evidence that your research played a significant role.

REMEMBER WHY YOU ARE A RESEARCHER

* To engage with impact, you don’t have to be someone who wants to change the world.
* You might simply be curious. Ask how engaging with the public or stakeholders might enable you to ask new questions and learn interesting things.
* Rather than engaging in impact just to tick boxes for funders or enhance your career, find impact opportunities that inspire you and remind you why you love being a researcher.
* Fast track your research impact: Using your research to make a difference
* Allyship in academia: Creating a community of inclusion