

Knowledge Management Fund

Uptake Guidance

KPSRL evaluates KMF proposals partially based on their plans for uptake and impact.¹ It is important that each KMF project, even those that concern internal processes or institutional learning and change, generates lessons for the benefit of the wider KPSRL community. **This document aims to inform (potential) applicants on what the KPSRL Secretariat understands as ‘uptake’ and provide concrete guidelines on how to develop a solid proposal for uptake and impact of your project’s results.**

Uptake

According to the KPSRL, **‘uptake’ happens when new insights are connected with existing knowledge within organizations, community or network, resulting in a change of policies, practices or assumptions.** Impact of such uptake could imply changes in policy or strategy, changes in stakeholders’ understanding and attitudes, or contributions to their competencies or partnerships². In short, uptake is the way in which results of your project will be used to realize the change sought.

It is insufficient for project results, learnings or knowledge products to simply be made available. An uptake plan interplays with other factors like the political context, the links between different actors and communities, and external influences.³ The Secretariat encourages projects to translate their findings for different audiences and actively engage in policy and practice debates, matchmaking, convening, networking etc. Moreover, an uptake plan for the findings of a research might look different than one that wants to share the discussions that happened during an event.

The following questions are to help you develop your plan.⁴ They should help stimulate your thinking and give due consideration to uptake. In your proposal, **it will not be necessary to answer each individual question.** Rather, **it should be clear to the reviewers that you have thought about these, resulting in a well-considered and promising uptake plan to inform SRoL ideas, actions or policies and that you clearly define and convincingly explain the change sought.**

1. Understanding impact and identifying your impact objective

- Have you given thought to what impact would look like for your proposed project?
- What role can you realistically play in achieving this impact?

Goal: Try to define the change sought, and consider what the contribution of your project might be.

2. Identifying your stakeholders and the context

- Who are the key stakeholders that could benefit from your project? Who will your proposed project seek to engage or inform?
- What is the contextual environment? Are there any opportunities for you to contribute to formal or informal processes? Are there any barriers to this, specific to the context, that you should take into account?

¹ Two criteria in our assessment forms that are explicitly related to uptake: ‘Well-considered and promising knowledge uptake plan to inform SRoL ideas, actions or policies’ and ‘Clearly defines and convincingly explains the change sought’.

² See [ESRC’s preferred definitions of impact](#).

³ See ‘[Knowledge Policy and Power](#)’ (2009) and ‘[Tools for Bridging Research and Policy](#)’ (2014) by the Overseas Development Institute.

⁴ Adapted from ODI’s Research Excellence Framework (REF) Impact Toolkit, based on Outcome Mapping (OM) principles. These guidelines have been adapted and expanded to provide an approach for knowledge uptake and impact for KMF activities.

Goals: Identify direct and specific participants, end users as well as additional relevant stakeholders. Identify aspects of the context that might support or challenge your uptake journey.

3. Developing an engagement strategy

- What are the current ideas, interest groups and processes for which your proposed project could be relevant? How do these influence policy and/or practice?
- What are the changes you would expect to be internalized, or like to be taken on board?

Goal: Develop a plan for engagement of end users. Consider how the uptake plan will take into account the needs of end users throughout the project. Evaluate the capacity of the end users to make use of and absorb new information and factor this into your engagement plan.

4. Planning your engagement activities

- Thinking of the previously identified stakeholders, how do you plan to reach them?⁵
- Considering the way in which your end users absorb (new) information, are your outputs (written outputs, digital tools, events and meetings⁶, multimedia) tailored to your envisioned audience?

Goal: Give consideration to who and you want to reach, and how engagement with these identified actors leads to the change sought. Keep in mind that engagement with audiences early on in the process can help when it comes to eventually communicating your results and making change. Take your own internal capacity for engagement in consideration too during that early stage.

5. Documentation and learning

- Have you given thought to how you will learn from experience and how you will know if your project does eventually have an impact?

Goal: make a plan to document your engagement plan and its effects as well as to reflect on this journey and learn from it.

Final thoughts

Your proposal will not need to answer each of the questions above. However, **thinking through these questions sequentially will help you formulate a better uptake plan**, on which each KMF proposal will be assessed.

If you have any additional questions on this, please get in touch via kmf@kpsrl.org.

⁵ The Platform Secretariat can help identifying and reaching your audience.

⁶ For tips on presentations and data visualization, please have a look at '[Research and Excellence Framework \(REF\) impact toolkit](#)', Overseas Development Institute, 2009: p30-32.