Translating for Impact: A new toolkit for demonstrating the larger impact of your work

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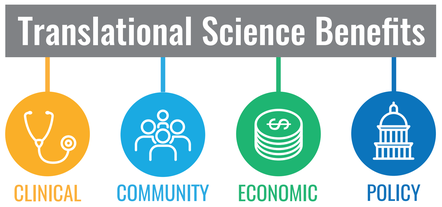
MEASURING BENEFITS OF TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE

Historically, researchers have focused on linking research to scientific outputs like publications and grants. But policymakers, the public, and institutional leadership care about the larger impact of research (e.g., lives saved and improved cost-effectiveness).

The Translational Science Benefits Model

Developed in 2017, the Translational Science Benefits Model (TSBM) offers a new approach for demonstrating the impact of science in the broader community.[1] The model identifies 30 tangible benefits that demonstrate research impact across four domains:

- **Clinical**: the adoption and implementation of new tools and procedures in clinical settings
- **Community**: the enhancement of healthcare or community and population well-being
- **Economic**: commercial or financial improvements
- **Policy**: the involvement with the policy process or formal adoption into policies, legislation, or governmental standards



translationalsciencebenefits.wustl.edu

TOOLKIT DEVELOPMENT

To help researchers apply the TSBM to their work, we began developing a complementary toolkit to integrate impact throughout the research process. We developed the toolkit in three steps:

- Review of existing tools
- Development and review of tool prototypes
- Pilot testing

Early- and mid-career researchers in the Implementation Research Institute are currently pilot testing the tools. In 2021, participants applied the **Case Study Builder** to their work and gave feedback on design, usability, and content. Future phases will include robust pilot testing of the full toolkit, review for equity and inclusion, and development of interactive tools in other formats.

1 Luke DA, Sarli CC, Suiter AM, et al. The Translational Science Benefits Model: a new framework for assessing the health and societal benefits of clinical and translational sciences. *Clin Transl Sci*. 2018;11(1):77-84. doi:10.1111/cts.12495

THE TRANSLATING FOR IMPACT TOOLKIT

The **Translating for Impact Toolkit** is a set of nine tools divided into three steps to help researchers plan for, track, and demonstrate translational benefits of their work for specific projects, over the course of their careers, or to the work of programs and centers.

PLAN for Impact

- **Road Map to Impact** – Map out your plan to achieve impact
- **Benefits 2×2** – Identify and prioritize the benefits of your research
- **Stakeholder Mapper** – Engage stakeholders based on their influence and interests
- **Team Manager** – Identify team members and expertise necessary to achieve impact

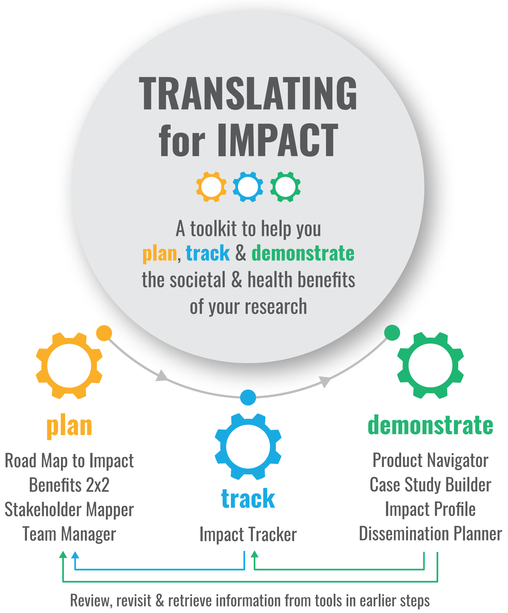
TRACK progress toward indicators of impact

- **Impact Tracker** – Benchmark progress on metrics of impact
- Review, revisit, and retrieve information from tools in the plan step

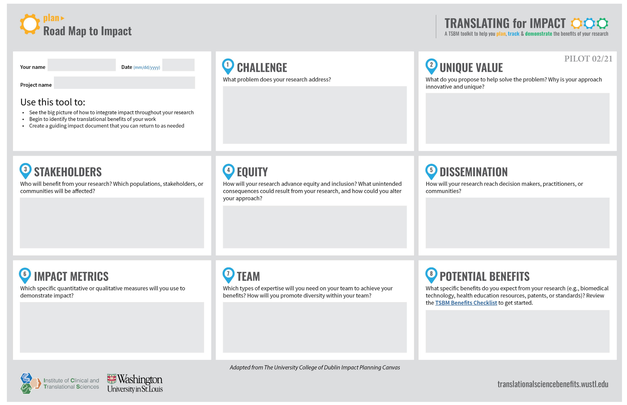
DEMONSTRATE impact to others

- **Product Navigator** – Choose the impact product for your goal and audience
- **Case Study Builder** – Tell the story of your impact
- **Impact Profile** – Summarize your impact in one page
- **Dissemination Planner** – Share your impact products
- Review, revisit, and retrieve information from tools in the plan and track steps

TRANSLATING FOR IMPACT TOOLKIT SCHEMATIC



ROAD MAP TO IMPACT TOOL



The Toolkit is designed to be completed by a group of people to ensure multiple perspectives and support equity, including the communities or population groups who could be impacted by the research. The **Road Map to Impact** is the foundational tool in the Toolkit, and should be completed by all users, as it lays the groundwork for all other tools and helps to frame the entirety of the project or work.

Depending on the researcher's goals, they can the pick and choose those tools that they believe will be most useful. For example, for completed projects, researchers may want to complete the Road Map and then move to the tools in the Demonstrate step.

LESSONS LEARNED

Initial pilot testing revealed that the **Case Study Builder** (available at **translationalsciencebenefits.wustl.edu/use-the-model**) helped users select benefits and prompted thoughtful reflection, but several users experienced PDF usability issues, such as difficulty entering text or saving. Users also said some of the TSBM indicator definitions were unclear, and it was challenging to identify effects of their projects on downstream health outcomes. These findings suggest several key lessons for future iterations of Translating for Impact and other D&I toolkits:

- **More training is needed to build researchers' understanding of downstream impact, especially early in their career.** Planning tools like the Road Map to Impact may help researchers conceptualize impact before developing a case study.
- **D&I toolkits should consider how form affects usability.** When developing interactive tools, PDFs may limit functionality that hinders understanding of key concepts.
- **Web-based tools could improve uptake of tools and their concepts.** Future iterations of the TSBM tools will be developed in a web-based format to allow users to more easily enter text, save and return to their work later, and collaborate with partners.

IMPLICATIONS FOR D&I

Training the next generation of clinical scientists to prioritize and promote translational impact in their work now is essential. The TSBM and Translating for Impact Toolkit provide a structure and language for this process. The Toolkit guides researchers in preparing impact statements for the broader public, future grants, promotion and tenure and more. Earlier and greater focus on impact will help to normalize consideration of translational impact along with traditional metrics such as publications and grants in the evaluation of individuals, projects, and programs.

Contact Information

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The nine tools in the **Translating for Impact Toolkit** will be available for researchers to pilot test in early 2022. Visit our website at **translationalsciencebenefits.wustl.edu** to sign up for updates.

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