

<p>Name of your approach to assess societal impact</p>	<p>IMPact of RESearch in the South (IMPRESS) (Genowefa Blundo Canto, Cirad, France)</p>
<p>Approach description</p> <p>Please summarize your approach and its application context/options in a few sentences or bullet points.</p>	<p>ImpresS (hereafter ImpresS) <i>ex-post</i>, is a case-study based method developed at the French Agricultural Research Center for International Development (hereafter Cirad) that evaluates the causal mechanisms through which agricultural research actions contribute to impacts in long-term innovation processes.</p> <p>Drawing on the principles of Contribution Analysis and Participatory impact pathway analysis, this is a step-wise, theory-driven method, based on participatory construction and validation of the impact pathway and its interpretation.</p> <p>Each ImpresS evaluation is an in-depth case study and consists of sequential building, refinement, and evidencing of the impact pathway and the underlying causal mechanisms through five iterative phases. These five phases update the information gathered from diverse data sources using diverse collection methods to increase internal and construct validity.</p> <p>The impact pathway, the indicators for each building block, and the causal mechanisms are identified and evidenced together with the actors who participated in the innovation process.</p> <p>The evaluation is based on reconstructing long-term (sometimes 20+ years) innovation processes.</p> <p>Beyond identifying the contribution of research actions to societal impacts, understanding how and for whom, it ultimately aims to improve scientific and research partnership planning, whilst fostering a culture of impact based on reflexive capacity in the institution.</p>
<p>Concepts used in the approach</p> <p>Please insert definitions for key concepts and components.</p>	<p>Impress adopts the impact pathway concept, as applied in the agricultural research literature. The impact pathway is an explicit causal chain that links inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impacts. We define inputs as tangible or intangible existing resources that the multiple partners of the intervention use and combine to produce tangible or intangible outputs, including technologies, trained people, or new knowledge. These outputs are used by multiple actors under a certain context, which leads to changes in their behavior, interactions, and practices (outcomes). These changes have social, economic, and environmental effects (first level impacts) for the diverse actors who interacted with the research community in coproducing outputs or in generating these changes. However, they may also have spillover or scaling effects (second level impacts) for other actors, who did not originally interact with the research community during the innovation process. The contribution of research actions to this causal chain is evaluated by taking the influence of the local context and of other actors into account. The method is based on five phases: preparation, dialogue, characterization, measurement, and validation.</p>
<p>Key challenges</p> <p>Please write down what you are struggling with concerning the application of your approach.</p>	<p>The method is based on five standardized phases but the definition of the evaluation questions and specific data collection, analysis and interpretation methods is made by the evaluation team which includes an evaluation specialist as a methodological referee, but is led by researchers who are knowledgeable about the innovation process studied. The purpose is to implement an utilization focused evaluation approach, but poses challenges of comparability for cross-case analysis, methodological rigor which is differently understood by different disciplines and a negotiation among the team to follow the criteria established by the evaluation field.</p>

	<p>Relying on a strong participatory component and the inclusion of different sources of knowledge in the development and analysis of the impact pathway, it also poses challenges in terms of confirmation bias of the mechanism at play, linked to power imbalances and group dynamics. Some negative effects or tensions might be minimized by participants, some events amplified, and subjectivity can play a role in mapping the causal steps and mechanisms. The focus on triangulation of data sources and collection methods aimed to mitigate such threats to internal validity. Transparent communication of how the causal mechanisms were identified and characterized is key to allow stakeholders to take ownership of the result and eventually reformulate them so that they make sense for them, increasing usability.</p>
<p>Visualization and narratives</p> <p>Please add short information on whether and how you use visualization, narratives or other boundary objects in your approach.</p>	<p>An impact narrative in the form of a one or two pager is built at the end of each in-depth case study (the full evaluation report is usually quite long, about 60 pages or more).</p> <p>Visual tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a chronogram of the innovation process studied with key research actions, contextual factors and events, and key actors engaged - an actor map (multiple of they evolve during the different phases of the innovation process) - an impact pathway - an impact radar
<p>Strengths and weaknesses</p> <p>From your own perspective: What would you consider as strengths and weakness of your approach?</p>	<p>Key strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the participatory building of the impact pathway that guides the whole data collection and the final interpretation of results - the focus on triangulation of data sources and methods to improve internal validity - the iterative building of the impact pathway that is updated as new knowledge is collected and analyzed - the long-term analysis of the innovation history <p>Key weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the utilization focus and the role of the evaluation specialist as a referee supporting the team whilst creating more ownership of the process and results, can imply lower systematization and cross-case comparability - the participatory focus implies that the evaluation team has strong facilitation skills to address power imbalances that might affect the results - the long-term focus implies that those with the "memory" of the process can be found and willing to participate - alternative explanations are sometimes less investigated
<p>Learn more</p> <p>If possible, please insert a link to a website, paper etc. where details of your approach and its application can be found.</p>	<p>Several publications from Impress <i>Ex post</i>:</p> <p>https://impress-impact-recherche.cirad.fr/resources/impress-publications</p> <p>And a 3 minutes video on the companion Impress <i>ex ante</i> approach:</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xS9qHY0l4gc</p>