Document A: Completing the Researchfish questions

A guide for STFC public engagement grant holders when using Researchfish

STFC Public Engagement Programme
Version 3.0, November 2022

www.ukri.org/councils/stfc/

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Introduction

Effectively and appropriately evaluating public engagement is important to STFC. In publishing the STFC public engagement evaluation framework, we aimed to not only make our own approach transparent, but to aid our community in undertaking their own engagement activities.

Our evaluation framework lays out a clear series of measures by which we measure, review, and reflect on the effectiveness of the STFC public engagement programme. Within this programme, our range of public engagement grant schemes allow the STFC community to undertake high quality engagement across the UK: grant holders extend the reach of STFC science and technology to new audiences remote from our own STFC laboratories and campuses.

Our evaluation framework was explicitly designed to allow STFC to evaluate our engagement *programme*, not simply our individual activities. Our grant schemes are part of this programme, and so we have worked with grant holders to create a more detailed, and specific, approach to recording and reporting data on work undertaken via STFC's public engagement grants.

Our grant holders report their data via Researchfish. This guidance document is designed to help that process. We hope that this will help applicants better understand our expectations for the evaluation of public engagement and help our grant holders to record and report their work over the lifetime of their award, and beyond.

The STFC Public Engagement Team

Monitoring and reporting on STFC public engagement grants

All STFC public engagement grant holders must submit their data into the **Researchfish** data collection system. Data can be entered over the course of the year, though many users choose to complete the process annually, during the 'submission window' in February and March.

While all grant holders complete the questions relevant to engagement in the 'common outcomes' question set, STFC public engagement grant holders have an additional, bespoke set of mandatory questions. These are labelled, 'Engagement Activities (STFC)'.

If you filled in Researchfish before 2018, you may notice that it looks a little different now. We have upgraded Researchfish, and it contains some new sections that provide us with more information about your public engagement grant project, and how its impacts align with STFC's public engagement evaluation framework.

We are confident that it will give us considerably more insightful data about the programme, and a more structured way for you to report your findings. Guidance for completing these new questions in Researchfish is covered in this document.

To help you with answering some of the questions, we are also providing our engagement grant holders with a **Metrics Spreadsheet**.

This will help you to capture data as the project progresses and will help you to sum data to enter into Researchfish. It also has some additional information that Researchfish does not ask for. This includes, for example, the post codes of any schools you have worked with during your project. This information allows us to look at the data from multiple award holders and see what the total reach is for our grant programmes. Please include as many details as you can on the metrics spreadsheet, even if they do not appear to be asked for on Researchfish. Guidance for completing the metrics spreadsheet is covered in Document B: Completing the metrics spreadsheet.

We would like you to submit the metrics spreadsheet via email to stfcpublicengagement@stfc.ac.uk by the Researchfish submission deadline each year.

We recommend that you update your engagement data as you are going along, to make it easier for you to collate your data at the end of the project, and during the annual Researchfish submission window.

This document contain some sections of text presented in red. These paragraphs have been included to provide additional guidance to you when you are completing your data entry.

Completing the Researchfish Questions

First, complete the Common Outcomes section (see [Research Fish guidelines](#)).

You will then need to respond to the Additional Funder Questions, including the Engagement Activities (STFC) question.

This section of Researchfish has been updated to reflect [STFC's public engagement evaluation framework](#) (hereafter referred to simply as 'the evaluation framework'). We recommend you download that document to assist you with completing Researchfish and the Metrics spreadsheet.

Notes on the tables in Researchfish:
o all dates refer to the calendar year 1 January – 31 December
o audience types are defined in the evaluation framework

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1. Did your project involve running any events?
See the evaluation framework for the definition of an event. If your project was producing a resource, rather than running events, please tick 'no'.

☐ Yes

☐ No (skip next question)

If yes, then:

What are the key outputs from your project?
Outputs are the events you run and the resources you create.

The STFC definition of an event is an activity delivered for a distinct group of audience members. If an event is repeated for a new set of audience members with a new start time, then that counts as two events. If an event runs for a long duration and people drop in and out throughout, then it is one event.

Please indicate the total number of events delivered for each audience type, in each calendar year that your project has run.
o *School student age ranges:*
    o *upper primary: key stage 2/second level, years 3-6 in England and Wales, years 4-7 in NI, P5-P7 in Scotland*
    o *lower secondary: key stage 3/third & fourth level, years 7-9 in England and Wales, years 8-10 in NI, S1-S3 in Scotland*
    o *upper secondary: key stage 4/senior phase, years 10 & 11 in England and Wales, years 11 & 12 in NI, S4-S6 in Scotland*

Audience	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Public adult							
Public families							
Upper primary schools							
Lower secondary schools							

Upper secondary schools							
Influencers (e.g., teachers and educators, science communicators)							
Training events for influencers							
Other groups of children (e.g., uniform groups)							

Who are the key audiences reached?

Reach has three main elements: the number of people engaged, the diversity of people engaged, and the length of time that people are engaged – or 'dwell time'. Please leave any sections blank if you do not have the information.

(Definitions for the following terms all appear in the evaluation framework.)
o *Schools that were 'new' to your organisation: This should be schools that have not engaged with your group or your type of activity before. They may have engaged with your wider organisation in the past.*
o *If you were running training events, here we have asked you to separate out teachers from other types of people being trained – 'other influencers'. This might include scientists, researchers, or community group leaders for example.*
o *'Dwell time' is how long were they actually engaged in the activity. This should not include time spent at registration or lunch breaks, for example. It should be recorded in hours and minutes (hh:mm). For an exhibition it would be an average time that people spent at your particular stand, not at the event as a whole.*
o *Partnerships: This does not have to be a formal partnership, but should record organisations without which the event would have run very differently or reached very different or considerably fewer people.*
o *Audience rating: We recommend you ask your participants for a rating out of 5 at a sample of your events (i.e., not every single event, and not by all participants).*

Events:

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of schools engaged							
Number of schools 'new' to your organisation							
Number of teachers reached at training events							
Average dwell time at training event							
Number of upper primary students reached							
Average dwell time of upper primary students							
Number of lower secondary students reached							
Average dwell time of lower secondary students							

Number of upper secondary students reached								
Average dwell time of upper secondary students								
Average % female students								
Other influencers trained or supported (not teachers)								
Total public reached								
% female public								
Number of organisations with which you formed partnerships								
% of audience rating your event 4 or more out of 5								

2. Did your project involve producing any resources?

Resources are creative products that can be used by audiences. They might be hard copy, such as handouts, leaflets, brochures, models, or demonstrators; digital resources such as websites, software, apps; or they may be artistic creations such as artwork, music, installations, or photography.

You will have had the opportunity to input some information about these in the 'common outcomes' section of Researchfish. Please try to include reference to the same ones you mentioned there.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (skip next question)

Please indicate the total number of resources developed each year

This is not how many copies you had printed, but how many individual resources you developed (e.g., how many leaflets you designed). Leave future years blank.

	Associated URL if applicable	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Hard copy resources for teachers/students								
Hard copy resources for public audiences								
Software and technical products								
Other digital resources								
Artistic or creative products								
Exhibits or demonstrators								

Who are the key audiences reached?

Reach has three main elements: the number of people engaged, the diversity of people engaged and the length of time that people are engaged – or 'dwell time'. Please leave any sections blank if you do not have the information.

Resources:

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of unique visitors to your website							
Average number of website visitors per month							
Average website dwell time (in minutes)							
Number of downloads of online resources							
Number of downloads of other digital resources							
Number of subscribers to other digital resources							
Number of hard copy resources given to target audiences							
Number of organisations with which you formed partnerships							
% of audience rating your resource 4 or more out of 5							

3. Have you reached the stage of your project that you have some key findings to submit?

If you are at or close to the end of your project then you should report the conclusions of your report here as 'key findings'. The Researchfish submission will remain open for one year after the end date of Small Public Engagement awards, for two years after the end date of Spark and Reaction awards, and for five years after the end date of other awards.

- ☐ Yes (go to next question)
- ☐ No (end of public engagement section)

4. Using the public engagement evaluation framework, please state how your activity has addressed the generic learning outcomes.

Below are STFC's generic learning outcomes. Each event or resource does not have to achieve all of them, but should aim to achieve at least one for each heading, including all of the 'feel' outcomes.

Participants will...	STFC Generic Learning Outcomes				
Do	• explore our science and technology further for themselves • share their understanding of our science and technology with learners, peers, family and their community • consider choosing, or encouraging others, to study and pursue careers in science and technology				
Feel	welcome	At the right level	inspired	Involved	Satisfied
Value	• science and technology for its economic, social and cultural contribution to society • employment in science and technology at all levels • the sharing of their understanding and skills with others				
Have skills to	• carry out scientific or technical activities themselves • participate in informed discussion about science and technology • share their skills, understanding and values with others				
Understand	We study the universe on the very large and the very small scale. This involves: • Work in the areas of: ➢ Big Telescopes ➢ Amazing Materials ➢ Inside the Atom ➢ Big Data and Computing • The marriage of scientific method and large facilities • Finding benefits for society				

This is an opportunity to give us a short narrative on various outcomes of your project. If you carried out quantitative evaluation then please put those data here. Alternatively, quotes or examples would be good to include here too.

Please provide evidence of how your work has inspired participants to 'do' something new in relation to the top-level outcomes: (250 words)
This is not what they did in the activity. Rather it is about what their intentions are to do now that they have participated.

How did your activity change the way people 'feel' in relation to the top-level outcomes? (250 words)
This should be under the five headings: What percentage of people felt welcome, inspired, and involved? Were the activities felt to be generally pitched at the right level? What average ratings out of 5 did your activities receive to demonstrate participants' overall satisfaction?

How did your activity change the way people 'value' science or technology in relation to the top-level outcomes? (250 words)
How did people feel about science and technology, or the particular topic you were covering, before and after the activity? Do you have a quote that indicates a change in perception of science and technology, or of the topic covered? Do they generally think careers in these areas are something they would want for themselves, their family, or other young people they know? For a training event, did the participants feel they wanted to share their new knowledge or skills with others?

How did your activity change the 'skills' your participants had in relation to the top-level outcomes? (250 words)
Was there an element of people learning how to do something for themselves – including learning how to ask questions or carry out research? For training events, did participants feel able to run an activity themselves and share it with others by the end?

How did your activity change your participants' 'understanding' in relation to the top-level outcomes? (250 words)
For this question, please focus just on the topic or research area that your project was about. Did people know more about the topic at the end than at the start? How do you know? If you were also able to discuss STFC and what we do, or if there is an obvious link to one of the subject themes in the Generic Learning Outcomes, then mention it here too.

5. By combining the data above, please summarise the key impacts of your project. For example, describe the outcomes relative to the types and numbers of audience you interacted with; or the relative change in learning achieved considering the dwell time (up to 500 words).

Please give a detailed response to up to 3 of the following impact statements, which most closely match the outcomes of your project:
This is an opportunity for a more narrative addition to the submission to give us a flavour of the impacts of your project. What makes your project different from the others? Were there unexpected outcomes? Were you trying to do something new and different? How successful was that? We would like you to be using any evidence of the generic learning outcomes to back up your statements. These could be numbers, as recorded above, or quotes, examples, and case studies if appropriate.

o   Describe the outcomes relative to the types and numbers of audience you interacted with.
For example, did your activity reach a very large number of people, perhaps via online videos or broadcast media? In which case, the evidence and depth of outcomes may be harder to quantify. Conversely, you may feel the relative number of people reached appears small but give evidence of the outcomes that were reached with those people.

o   Describe the relative change in learning achieved considering the dwell time.
For example, were you doing activities in a busy public place, and so people may not be expected to spend particularly long? Give evidence or quotes of how people have nonetheless changed their views, attitude or knowledge during their interaction. Conversely, perhaps your project worked with a relatively low number of people over an extended period of time. Discuss and give evidence of their change in knowledge, values, or intentions as a result.

o   Describe the scale of the outputs and reach considering the size of the grant and team.
Do you consider your project to have been exceptionally good value for money? Did you do something amazing for a relatively small amount of money? Or can you identify an individual who has gone the extra mile to increase the impact of your project?

o   Describe the successes or challenges that the processes you put in place (e.g., the collaborative partnerships, or the systems to support the staff working with you) had upon the outputs and outcomes of your project.
If your project was very process driven (for example, it was about setting up a network, or creating new partnerships, rather than or as well as producing events or resources), describe and give evidence of the impacts that has had on the groups or people involved, and their change in views, knowledge, skills, or intentions.