

From research to action

Facilitating knowledge exchange in ecology by building respectful partnerships

Worksheets

Overview of a coproduction model to make research actionable

Most scientists studying species, ecosystems, and natural resources hope the results of their research will inform policies and management activities. Making research ‘actionable’ in this way requires effective knowledge exchange between the producers of knowledge (in our case, scientists) and the users who can apply the knowledge. There are many knowledge exchange techniques, but in this workshop, we focus coproduction of research: when scientists partner with those implicated in, or affected by, their research. Scientists and their partners design, execute, and communicate research in a way that is informed by all partner needs. To ensure coproduction of research is both effective and respectful, we introduce a four-stage model (Westwood et al. in press; last page). This workshop will guide you through each stage.

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Further guidance on...

Applying this model: Westwood, A., Barker, N.K.S., et al. 2020. Towards a coproduction research model for actionable research on boreal birds with a focus on building respectful partnerships. *Avian Conservation and Ecology*.

Coproduction generally: Beier, P., L. J. Hansen, L. Helbrecht, and Behar, D. 2017. A how-to guide for coproduction of actionable science. *Conservation Letters* 10(3):288–296.

Coproducing research with Indigenous partners: Théberge, D., M.-A. Picard, J. Leguerrier, J.-M. Beaudoin, and F. Grenon. 2019. Initiative for knowledge co-creation in collaboration with Indigenous communities. Basic approach: Ethics of research. Report submitted to Natural Resources Canada. Quebec, Chair of Educational Leadership in Indigenous Forestry Université Laval. Available at: <https://cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/publications?id=40002>

Stage 2: Self-assess relationships

Before beginning project, or initiating relationships to coproduce research, researchers should ask themselves the following questions to assess the strength of their relationship with potential or current partners. First, select the partner from Stage 1 with whom you have the strongest existing relationship. Then, fill out the following questionnaire to self-assess your strength of that relationship. Note that there are no right or wrong answers: this exercise is meant to encourage reflection and identify areas to strengthen your partnership. Fill out a separate version of the questionnaire for each actual or potential partner for your research project.

1. What is my research intent? (e.g. serving my own interest, serving mutual interest, serving partner-defined research questions, etc.)

2. Would I consider myself a member of this partner’s community?

3. How am I entering into this relationship? Who invited me? Am I inviting myself?

4. What impacts have past research or researchers had on this partner?

5. Are there sensitive areas or topics I should avoid or be aware of?

6. What relationship do the funders of the research have with this partner?

7. What relationship do my other research partners have with this partner?

8. What has this partner told me about how to work in collaboration with them? Have they developed guidance documents or protocols?

9. Will this partner's knowledge be used to design the research?

10. Will my work contribute towards self-determination of this partner? For example, can I hire people from the local community?

11. Am I prepared to value the relationships with this partner above my research interests?

12. If tensions arise, have we or how will we establish inter-culturally appropriate protocols to resolve conflict?

13. Who will own or have intellectual property rights over the research results? Who will be credited, and how?

Stage 3: Identify policy mechanisms

With your group, brainstorm laws, policies, and activities applicable to each of your projects. Consult the examples provided by the facilitator. Include in your list the people who might be in charge of, or carry out, these laws, policies, or activities. Consider:

- If you do not know the names of people, how might you find them? (Government directories, introduction from other contacts)
- Is the list of persons reflected on your list of partners from Stage 1? If not, should they be added?

Policy mechanism		How could this mechanism be influenced by evidence from your project?	Knowledge users	
Name	Type (law, activity, etc.)		Responsible for creating or updating the mechanism	Responsible for implementing the mechanism

Stage 4: Plan for knowledge exchange

Note that for a coproduced project, all research and communications planning should be conducted jointly with partners. However, as an exploratory exercise, fill out the following tables to develop communications tools for knowledge exchange with (1) the partner you used for the Stage 2 exercise and (2) a knowledge user identified in Stage 3. Referring to the examples provided by the facilitator, brainstorm a variety of communications tools for all the potential partners and potential knowledge users identified in Stage 1 and Stage 3.

Partner and/or knowledge user	Communications product	Product type (social media, scientific publication, etc.)	Target audience	<i>Coproduced with partner/knowledge user or directed at partner/knowledge user?</i>

