NELGA

Research Communications Guidance Manual

"Maximising Research Impact: Driving Change and Making a Difference"

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GLOSSARY - AN EXPLANATION OF THE TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Explanation
Research Communication	The ability to interpret or translate complex research findings into language, format, and context that non-experts understand.
Policy Briefs	Short reports aimed at policymakers. They can: Provide balanced information on several policy options. Argue for a particular course of action. Summarise research and provide evidence and recommendations for policy audiences.
Success Stories	Stories centered on individuals giving first-hand accounts and testimonies, bearing witness to the positive impact on research findings in land governance policy.
Policy Cycle	A policy cycle is a process that explains how a policy should be drafted, implemented and assessed. It serves more as a guide for those new to policy than as a practical strictly defined process, but many organisations aim to use a policy cycle as best practice.
Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)	A non-governmental organisation (NGO) is a group that functions independently of any government with the objective of improving social conditions. NGOs are typically non-profit institutions. They are sometimes called civil society organisations and are established on community, national, and international levels to serve a social or political goal such as improved land rights for communities.
Press Release	An official statement often containing direct quotes that gives information to newspapers, magazines, television news programmes, and radio stations.
Visualisation platforms	Using graphics and icons to explain facts and figures to enhance your research work.
Infogfx	Information graphic. A succinct, often colourful design which illustrates an argument, main findings, or a point you are making in your research.
Podcasting	Recording an in-depth conversation by yourself or with other people about a topic and publishing it online or broadcasting it on the radio or television.
Ted Talks	A global initiative sharing ideas that are worth spreading.
Lectures	A way of verbally communicating your findings/work to a high-level audience. This tool works well at conferences and in learning institutions including universities.
A multiplier effect	A factor by which the return resulting from an expenditure is greater than the expenditure itself.

INTRODUCTION

This manual accompanies the self-paced online course link here, going into further detail on certain aspects of the course to enhance your eLearning experience. The manual can be downloaded and easily referred to as 'offline' for those with a limited internet connection.

The manual aims to reinforce your approach to research communications in the land governance policy landscape and help you maximise the impact of your research by effectively communicating your findings and thereby driving change.

The primary purpose of the manual, which accompanies the course "Maximising Research Impact: Driving Change and Making a Difference," is to provide researchers with guidance on the skills and knowledge needed to enhance their research communication. You will learn to leverage social media, develop lobbying skills to influence policymakers, and craft engaging research communication products like policy briefs, press releases, surveys, online polls and multimedia success stories.

This manual is designed for:

- Land governance researchers.
- Young professionals.
- Undergraduate students/DAAD scholarship prospects.

By the end of the online course and by referring to this manual, you will be able to:

- Communicate your research, including audience mapping and engagement, and use various communication tools and methodologies.
- Write and use storytelling techniques for research communication.
- Present and disseminate research findings.
- Package and deliver research for non-academic audiences.
- Write for the web and social media, including blogs and policy briefs.
- Create content for media appearances.
- Use digital platforms like YouTube and podcasts for presenting lectures and research work.

1 MODULE 1: REFINING RESEARCH COMMUNICATION PRODUCTS AND IDENTIFYING TARGET AUDIENCES

In this online module, you will learn to identify **key research communication products**, refine these products based on best practices, and effectively target the right audiences. Through practical examples and expert guidance, this module will equip you with the essential skills to **communicate your research findings** clearly and impactful, influencing policy and improving **resource management in land governance**.

1.1 Research Communication Products

This module covers the following:

- Identifying a variety of research communication products.
- Structuring a policy brief and recognising the call to action or change.
- Understanding how different communication products are tailored to specific audiences.

1.1.1 A policy brief

A key research communication product is a policy brief. Structured in such a way, this **2–4-page A4 document, containing text, images,** and **links to videos**, provides a way to **explain a current policy issue and calls for change**. Policy briefs are targeted at decision-makers and policymakers.

Find some policy brief examples here:

- NAMIBIA Land Governance country Assesment for NAIP
- Tenure Security of Internally Displaced Persons.
- Navigating the Mailo Impasse.
- Strengthening Land Security for Internally Displaced Persons in Cameroon - NELGA (uneca.org).

Here is a quick guide to structuring a policy brief:
A policy brief explains the current issue, actions needed to address the issue and the positive impact implementing these actions will have on people's lives, which may include the social, economic and political landscape and the environment. The policy brief has three key areas: the Issue, Action and Impact.

A policy brief can be structured as follows:
Title: Always start with a title. The title should summarise the policy brief and leave the reader wanting to find out more:

- **Policy Brief:** In the 1st paragraph, sum up the policy brief in a few sentences.
- **Example: Title:** Land use planning in the context of climate change adaptation. This policy brief is based on the experience of land use planning and land use management interventions of five climate change adaptation projects in Tanzania, financed under the EU-funded Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) initiative. This policy brief is directed at policy and decision makers in land use planning, as well as related sectors such as agriculture, livestock and fisheries. It outlines the challenges encountered in the areas where the five projects were implemented and provides some recommendations to address these.

- **Issues:** Explain some evidence-based facts and figure:
  Example: For rural communities in Tanzania land is their biggest asset. About 72% of the population in Tanzania derives its livelihoods and incomes from activities that depend directly on land resources, in particular through crop farming and livestock keeping, which both are highly affected by climate change. Secure access to land and sound land management that considers climate change impact are therefore crucial elements for sustainable rural livelihoods. The fact that the agricultural sector contributes to 26% of Tanzania's GDP also indicates the importance of good land management policies and practices. Tanzania's National Five-Year Development Plan (NFYDP 2017-2021) recognises this and asserts that land use planning and management are a key variable for unlocking the potential for growth by making land accessible for productive use in rural and urban areas. Due to competing land demands in rural areas, the country has been witnessing frequent land use conflicts, leading to insecurities. This problem was already recognised in the National Land Policy of 1995, which points out that the livestock population is growing while the land available for grazing has reduced due to the extension of land for cultivation. Land use planning is seen as an important tool to address this problem and is promoted through the Land Use Planning Act of 2007, the Land Act No. 4 of 1999 and the Village Land Act No.5 of 1999, which foresees the preparation and management of village land use plans.
  Challenges: Explain the problem statement or challenges here.
  Inadequate scale of planning: The focus of most land use planning policies and legislation in rural Tanzania are at village level and, to a lesser extent, district level land use plans. However, for effective land use planning the scale required is often not village or even district level but landscape level.
  Lack of compliance, enforcement and coordination: Where land use plans have been developed, there is often a lack of enforcement/compliance, with political and economic interests taking precedence over agreed land use plans.
- **Intervention/action/change:** Explain the intervention/action/change you wish to see.
- Differentiated guidelines for different landscapes and agroecological zones.
- Make use of modern data sources to complement local knowledge.
- **Call to action:** Summarise the policy brief with a call to action and explain the impact of this change.
- Provide different approaches and scales to land use planning that go beyond village and district level, such as landscape level planning in rangeland areas and river basins.
- Incorporate the use of modern data sources that are freely, or at low cost, available in land use planning guidelines. Information from these sources can complement local knowledge to inform land use plans.
- Promote local awareness and ownership by applying strong participatory approaches for village land use plans. This requires building the facilitation skills of district staff.
- Include explicit conflict resolution mechanisms in all land use plans, regulations, and guidelines.
- Mainstream climate change in all land use planning-related policies, regulations and guidelines.

1.2 Other Communication Products

Other communication products include sending out research findings through **newsletters, success stories, short multimedia posts** (text/images/infographics/videos) on **social media platforms**, **inviting media** to events and sending out a **press release** containing quotes (opinions) from key actors.
Find an example of a **Success Story** here: [You searched for Success story - NELGA (uneca.org)]

1.2.1 Success Stories

Sample:

- Beginning an Impactful Adventure with NELGA - NELGA.
- From NELGA Scholarship to a GIZ Advisor - Anthony's Success Story - NELGA.
- Fatima-Ezzarah's Success Story - NELGA Alumni - NELGA.
- Jimmy's Success Story- NELGA Alumni - NELGA.
- Celina's Success Story - NELGA Scholar - NELGA.
- Enhancing Sustainable Land Governance: NELGA's Collaboration with PLAAS | NELGA (uneca.org).

Target audience: Events, reports, online audiences

The combination of the right words, rhythm to the words and how people tell stories (often verbally) can build a group identity, stir strong emotions, engage audiences and amass people to take action. The advent of social media has amplified storytelling on a mass scale. This makes storytelling a catalyst for social and policy changes. All over the world, a variety of individuals and organisations are trying to make a difference through storytelling. Success stories are a form of storytelling and can frame a story positively to show the impact of an action. They can be created in many different multimedia formats. Find here a guide to writing a success story:

Storytelling is vital for making meaningful connections with targeted audiences and promoting programmes in a memorable and compelling way.

Think like a journalist to express your policy research

To begin, let's examine how journalists work to convey messages to their intended audiences. Let's start by asking ourselves, what makes a great story?

- Stories are never about big issues or complex problems.
- Stories are always about how ordinary people are affected by big issues and complex problems.
- To identify a compelling story angle, find an ordinary person directly affected by an ISSUE and "frame" your story around that person.
- First, consider your approach to creating a story, known as an 'angle' in news terminology.

Don't ask **"what"** the story is about; instead, ask **"who"** the story is about.

What makes a compelling story for audiences?

- Humanity and human emotion.
- Stories and storytelling.
- How ordinary people are affected by big issues.
- How ordinary people react to extraordinary situations.
- Something that makes the audience ask: "what if it was me?"
- Something new, unusual, or breaks stereotypes.
- An unforgettable image, sound, or moment.
- Something that touches people's lives directly.

Nothing provides a more convincing and factual account and shows the impact of the work that an organisation is carrying out than gathering stories from the field, case studies, or human-interest materials. These stories can be used to build on evidence-based data, used as catalysts at the village/district/national and international levels, can be used in policy briefs, delivered to the mass media in multiple forms, uploaded online, and used as real-life case studies exposing the reality on the ground to influence policy and appeal to donors consequently.

A success story describes **what, when, why, where, and how** an event has positively impacted an individual's or organisation's life (**who**). A learning story, however, focuses on an individual's response to challenges arising from an event, how these challenges were addressed, and what was learned from the experience.

Stories from the field/case studies can be used for various purposes, including results reporting, contribution to ongoing M&E systems, evaluations, and fundraising. Stories can also help monitor changes. Before developing a story, it is important to be clear about its scope (audience and purpose) and focus.

Step 1: Identify the purpose and audience of the stories you intend to gather

Deciding which type of story is required and who the audience is an important first step in developing human interest stories. Before travelling to the field/location, you need to be clear about why you need to collect the story, who the audience is, and how the story will be used. This will help you while conducting interviews. Make sure your story aligns with GTAP objectives.

Step 2: Determine the story focus

Once the story's purpose and audience are clear, it is important to determine its focus and scope. You need to define the angle/approach of the story. Will it focus on the individuals participating in the event or on the issue?

Step 3: Select sites and people that will be interviewed

Based on the decision regarding the focus of the story, you need to identify where you will be collecting the information (regional, district, community, ward level, etc.), the sites (Your office, school, health clinics, general community meeting etc.) and the people you need to interview to get the information you need (staff, households, patients, nurses etc.). You need to plan in advance where you can get the information you need that is relevant to the focus and purpose of the story, and make contacts/arrangements in advance before travelling. Involve other partners in this decision.

Step 4: Gather the information - interview template

Interviews serve as the primary data collection technique for stories. However, before conducting the interviews, everyone should know why the story is covered (location, when it started, primary activities, partners etc.).

Step 5: The basics of storytelling

The elements needed to write/create the story are: "ISSUE – ACTION – IMPACT".

For example, you could start by describing the specific problem or challenges confronted by the person/community, then provide information on the action/intervention that is taking place, and finally describe how that action impacts the person/community's life or brings hope to a situation.

It is important to use simple, not too technical language. Get real quotes in the person's own words. A question that can generate a good quote is, "Tell us one service that would really transform your life."

Other tips when creating stories:

- Tone and Style of Writing.
- Engage people – make it interesting.
- Make a challenge a thousand miles away seem real.
- Bring a huge problem down to an understandable, human, individual level.
- Move people emotionally.
- Generate a response – a wish to help/take action/support your organization.
- Background information.

Ensure that you have basic information about your story subjects and interview partners, such as full names, ages, titles, vocations, etc.

Quotes

Please remember to include at least 2-3 quotes, especially from beneficiaries, focus populations, and partner implementers. Quotes are essential to a good story.

Language

You are writing or recording a story for an external audience. Write in a descriptive, appealing way using simple language. Make certain to explain terms and principles that may be common sense to you but not to your reader. Limit the use of abbreviations and acronyms to the absolute minimum if you have to use them at all.

Photos

Each story should be accompanied by high-quality photos of the subjects described in the story. The photos need to give readers a real insight into how their work/donation/contribution to your organization will make a difference in people's lives and futures. Ensure that the individual portrayed in the story agrees that his/her story be told, and his/her photos be published—get a signed photo consent form (bring sufficient copies).

Photo Guidelines

Photos related to the story, showing your organisation's impact:

- Take a series of photographs of the same subject/person (don't depend on one shot).
- Get close up to your subject. Tightly frame the shot.
- It is best if the (central subject) looks down the barrel of the camera.
- Look for bright colours, clothing, blankets, background buildings and walls.
- Ensure the dignity of your photo subject/s. Positive pictures that show dignity and hope are best overall.
- The more 'self-explanatory' the shot, the better.
- Include photos of your branded materials 'in situ' or in use, with visibility of EU and partners logos. Think of photos that show a situation before and after your intervention, showing the results of the contribution.

Figure 1: Caption: Farmers like James, are change makers in Tanzania, as they plant drought-resistant crops in Chamwino, Dodoma, to ensure food security. Source: Imani Nsamila, GCCA Tanzania funded by the European Union

Captions

All photos need to be accompanied by captions, including the name of the person(s) featured.

Photographs must be accompanied by IPTC8 metadata or a separate metadata file in English detailing (for each image) the photographer's name, date of production, place of production and a short description of the image, including names and functions of any identifiable individuals.

Credits

Credits, including the name of the photographer (please specify partner organisation), date and location, are needed for each photo.

Quality and format of photos

Photos should be shared in the highest resolution available, over 3MB.

Consent forms

All people interviewed should consent to their images/videos being used for promotional purposes. Respect and dignity will be employed at all times. Data Protection will be enforced.

Video

The principles of video are the same as those of photography. However, keep it simple and hold the video camera/phone steady and in one place at all times. If the shot is a moving shot, let the subject/person you are filming walk into the frame and out of the frame. Do not follow that subject/person.

For a static interview hold the camera or phone steady, ideally using a tripod, and do not move the video camera or phone throughout the interview unless you are experienced and can zoom in close to the subject when they are talking about an 'emotional event' or something with 'great impact'. Have the interviewee look at the interviewer off-camera if you are videoing a message or statement, have the speaker look directly at the video camera or mobile phone camera.

Place a pull-up banner or branding just behind or next to the person you are interviewing. Make sure it can be seen in the shot.

Sound

Use external clip mics on a video camera if you can. Sound is the biggest challenge to capturing video. Using 'natural sound', i.e. the birds singing, is key to an authentic video and paints a picture of the immediate environment. The call to prayer conjures up images of coastal communities for example. Most people forget about this when editing video and paste over sound with the use of too much music. There is not enough natural sound being used online. Natural sound catapults the viewer into the story.

Radio

Radio remains one of the most powerful and accessible channels for reaching far and wide. Audio podcasts have also taken off and are becoming increasingly popular as an intimate form of communication. The proximity of radio and podcasts makes them important vectors of education, awareness raising and knowledge acquisition, as well as a tool for influencing the dynamics of social relations, addressing policy issues and for transparency and accountability. It helps researchers reach a wide variety of people – and is relatively inexpensive.

Radio interviews either live or for recorded podcasts give the audience/listeners a lot of information quickly. Here is a short overview of the most important rules:

1. Use language that is concise and neutral; the aim is to convey a maximum of information in a minimum amount of time.
2. Repeat keywords rather than using synonyms. Synonyms are often difficult for listeners to understand and sometimes lead to misunderstandings. – Beware of foreign words. Do not base your manuscript on what you understand. Consider whether your listeners will understand it. If there is no alternative for a foreign word, you should use it and then explain it.
3. Abbreviations and acronyms need to be explained the first time they are mentioned in the interview. Do not assume all listeners know what COP 28 (Conference of Parties 28th edition means.
4. Keep numbers and figures to a minimum. They are hard to understand on the radio or podcasts. If you have to use numbers, try to round them up. Numbers are best understood in fractions rather than percentages. So "Almost half the female pastoralist community in Kenya do not own land", which is easier to digest than saying "fifty per cent". However, there are cases when it is necessary to give the exact figures and numbers down to the decimal points.

1.3 Research Products and Target Audiences

Let's take a look at other research products and their targeted audiences, along with some examples.

1.3.1 Press releases

Press releases are a fundamental communication tool used to attract media attention to an event. The aim is for the media to cover the event in a story published on their respective channels.

Sample press release: Africa's Land governance issues under spotlight in virtual NELGA meeting | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (uneca.org)

Here are some tips on writing a press release:
Make sure your story is newsworthy. These are the questions you need to ask yourself before writing a press release:

1. Is there anything "new" in my story?
2. What is the change I want to present?
3. Will anyone care?

Write strong headlines

If the receiver does not immediately understand what your story is about, they will discard it.

If your press release is about the gaps in a new land use law state it as exactly that. “New land use law will displace rural communities in South Africa.”

Get your top line in the first line of your press release
Getting a receiver to read your press release is important, but if your first sentence doesn't grab them, they may not read any further—which is why you need to get the "top line" (the most important part) of your story right at the beginning of your release. Your first line should be a summary of the story (in no more than 15-20 words) and read like the opening of a news story.

Journalists are taught to include as many of the "five Ws" (who, what, where, why, and when) in the opening line of news stories as possible. If you want examples of great first lines for press releases, look no further than your daily newspaper or online channel.

The ideal length of a press release is about an A4 side or about 300 to 400 words (the length of a short news item). That's just three or four short paragraphs and a couple of quotes.

Subheadings and bullet points can be helpful to make information easy to digest, particularly if you include figures or statistics.

Use quotes to provide insight, not information. Quotes should be used to provide insight and opinion and sound like a real person said them. They definitely should be free of jargon or technical language.

What if, after an event, the media wishes to interview you?

Being interviewed by the media can be daunting. However, some basic rules and techniques will increase your chances of being effective.

First, remember that you are the expert, and that’s why the media has asked for an interview with you.

Second, this is a great opportunity to talk about the wonderful work that your organization does or the importance of its impact. Broadcast interviews are particularly good for this because you appear in person and cannot easily be misquoted.

Finally, the interviewer will want you to perform well, as it will improve the interview. They may challenge you to justify your answer, but they won't try to trip you up unless they are investigating some wrongdoing and think you are hiding something.

1.3.2 Factsheets

Target audience: Policy makers, decision-makers, researchers, donors

Sample: NELGA-Factsheet-LGAF_EN.pdf (uneca.org)

A factsheet should be no longer than 4 A4 pages, with 2 pages being ideal. As you can see from the Nelga factsheet, it has the title Land Governance Assessment Framework. Some background on the organisation, objectives, and key facts can be included, such as budgets, funding, and the length of the project, with contact information if relevant.

See here for inspiration on a more detailed factsheet: Fact Sheet_Igunga_Sept 2019 v5.pdf

1.3.3 Infographic

Target audience: Events, reports, online audiences

Sample: Rwanda LAND Infographic: Land Use Planning | LandLinks (land-links.org)

In the infographic sample above, you will see the following information represented visually:
"In Rwanda, the strategic use of land is critical to economic and social growth. To support effective land use planning, recent research recommends 1) strengthening the legal/policy framework and coordination mechanisms, 2) improving the development and implementation of land use plans, and 3) increasing the capacity of institutions, officials and citizens to manage the process."
"This document is based on 1) *An Assessment of Land Use Planning in Rwanda* (August 2015), produced by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Rwanda Land Project, and 2) *Land Market Values, Urban Land Policies, and their Impacts in Urban Centers of Rwanda*, by Land Project and Institut d'Enseignement Supérieur (INES) – Ruhengeri".

1.3.4 Newsletter

Newsletters can be sent directly to emails and remind your target audiences that your organization is current and relevant.

Start your newsletter in a positive way:

Welcome to our newsletter! We hope you find this newsletter informative. We look forward to your publications, blogs, and articles to include them eventually. We welcome your feedback on how we can improve the newsletter.

NELGA Secretariat

Explain the activities carried out during the month or the quarter (depending on how often you produce a newsletter).

With each activity, state progress and learn lessons!

Here are some examples of **Newsletters**:

- NELGA Newsletter Vol 2 Issue 3 (uneca.org).
- NELGA (campaign-archive.com).
- NELGA Newsletter Vol 2 Issue 3 (mailchi.mp).
- https://mailchi.mp/197b2fb16695/nelga-newsletter-vol-2-issue-3https://nelga.uneca.org/newsletter/.

Target audience: academics/researchers/ policymakers

1.3.5 Opinion editorials

Op-eds are a great way to promote your organisation by placing information from your organisation in a traditional newspaper or hosting it on an online media site for free. Offering an expert opinion to a media outlet is also a way to promote your activities. Op-eds are traditionally found at the back of newspapers in the opinion pages. They are in-depth, often personal analyses of a subject from an influential expert in the field.

Here are some tips for writing an op-ed:

Organise your writing

Good writing is simple, clear, and concise.
By not calling attention to itself, good writing is 'transparent', helping the reader focus on the idea you are trying to communicate rather than on the words that you are using to describe it.
The key to good business writing is organisation. You need to know where you are going before you start, so do your research and identify the key messages you need to cover.

Have I explained the topic adequately?

Does my writing flow in a logical way, and have I given complex explanations in a step-by-step form?
Have I 'translated' any technical terms?
Have I said enough to answer questions and allay fears without giving too much detail?
Have I used visuals to help explain complex facts?
Have I cautioned the reader, where necessary, against common mistakes and misreading of the information?

Spend time crafting the title

80 per cent of people will read the headline of a piece of text. Twenty per cent will read the rest.

Remember

Policymakers are more likely to pay attention to and share well-written op-eds with colleagues and take action.
Written documents are a chance to get your issue across to your target audience, backed up by research and data.
You and your organisation are judged at face value on the quality of your written communications (website/social media content/articles in newspapers/ emails/letters etc.)

Target audience: academics/researchers/ policymakers

Sample: https://nelga.uneca.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/NELGAG3.pdf

1.3.6 TV and Radio Shows

As with op-eds, offering an expert opinion and appearing on a TV talk show or radio station on prime time is a cost-effective way of lobbying and influencing opinion. TV and radio stations are always looking for expert people and content, which is a great way to appeal to a mass audience.

Target audience: General public and research stakeholders

Sample:
Walk the talk of inclusive land governance (globallandscapesforum.org)
Popular New Radio Show Highlights Women's Land Rights in Tanzania | LandLinks (land-links.org)

1.3.7 Podcasts

Podcasts have exploded in popularity over the past few years. They serve the same purpose as appearing on a prime-time TV or radio show. However, the interviewer often builds their own personal online brand, selling books off the back of this notoriety. Once again, the podcaster is always hunting for an expert or new content. Be the researcher who can provide that content to also build on your online brand.

Target audience: Decision makers, researchers, academics, wider public
PODCAST Ep. 10: Sustainable rural livelihoods - an approach, not a theory | Plaas
PODCAST Ep. 8: Social reproduction, capitalist exploitation and the surplus population | Plaas
PODCAST Ep. 1: 25 years of land and agrarian studies in South Africa | Plaas

Sample: #research... - The Network of Excellence on Land Governance in Africa | Facebook
Click here for a podcast about land rights: Land Matters Podcast - Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

1.3.8 Blogs

Blogs have been around for a bit longer than podcasts and are the written version of podcasts, they continue to gain popularity. As a researcher, you can have your own blog stating evidence-based research, facts and figures. This will build your credibility and online brand.

Target audience: General public and research stakeholders

Sample: Blog – Page 3 – NELGA AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST FRANCOPHONE (nelga-afrique-ouest-francophone.org) (available in French only)
Our blogs on Land | Land Portal

1.3.9 Online videos

Online videos can also be podcasts. More and more people are recording conversations and placing them on video channels like YouTube and audio channels like Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Target audience: The general public and research stakeholders, as well as a wider audience.

Sample: NELGA Secretariat - YouTube

1.3.10 Targeting audiences

The Power-Interest Matrix is a good way to identify and target audiences with your research. The matrix classifies stakeholders into four distinct quadrants, each of which demands a specific approach:

1. ***High Power, High Interest: (Policymakers/decisionmakers/)***
   These stakeholders are often the most critical, as they possess the power to impact your research significantly and are highly interested in what you do. Engaging them closely is imperative.

2. ***High Power, Low Interest: (politicians/government officials/)***
   These stakeholders have substantial influence but aren't necessarily invested in your day-to-day activities. Effective communication and occasional engagement are key.

3. ***Low Power, High Interest: (Other researchers, institutions)***
   Stakeholders in this category are genuinely interested but don't have much influence. Keeping them informed and involved can help you gain support or avoid potential issues.

4. ***Low Power, Low Interest: (Wider public in the region/country)***

These stakeholders have minimal impact and minimal interest. While you should still maintain open lines of communication, your interactions may be less frequent.

When targeting audiences, go ahead and begin mapping your audiences here: [Mapping Political Context: Stakeholder Analysis | ODI: Think change]
This tool helps identify **key stakeholders**, understand their **levels of interest and influence**, and **strategically tailor your communication efforts** to engage them effectively.

2 MODULE 2: PUBLISHING YOUR KEY RESEARCH COMMUNICATION PRODUCTS.

In this module, you will learn how to publish your work through a structured policy cycle, collaborate with key allies, and use various dissemination channels. After completion, you can effectively publish using a policy cycle, identify allies like media, NGOs, etc. and choose the best dissemination channels, including social media, websites, and newsletters, ensuring your work reaches the right audience and makes an impact.

This module covers the following:

- Understanding and applying the six essential steps: Agenda Setting, Formulation, Adoption, Implementation, Evaluation, and Support/Maintenance.
- Enhancing credibility and visibility through various publishing methods, including online platforms.
- Recognising the importance of direct interaction, timely opportunities, and networking.
- Identifying and utilising effective communication channels such as social media, websites, newsletters, and traditional media.
- Applying learned strategies to real-world research scenarios for maximum impact.

Learning objectives:

- Leverage a policy cycle to publish your research.
- Explain the steps to a policy cycle.
- Identify the channels to publish your research.

Consider the following:

- Do researchers need direct contact with government ministers for policy engagement?
- How can researchers publish their findings without direct contact with government ministers?
- At what stages of the research process is policy engagement most effective?

2.1 Leveraging a policy cycle to publish your research

Here, you will see how to utilise a policy cycle to publish your work and identify how to publish your work through government, media, NGOs, and institutions.
A policy cycle is a theoretical framework used to describe the stages involved in developing and implementing public policies. There are six steps to a policy cycle.

1. **Agenda setting**
   - Identify new issues for government action.
   - Prioritise or assess multiple issues.

   Example: A foresight study shows urban population growth may lead to unaffordable housing. Policymakers may relax land use policies and introduce more social and affordable housing.
   Key Tip: Use this stage to raise awareness
   - Publish on social media using a case study.
   - Contact the media for a press release to explain the issue.

2. **Formulation**
   - Define policy structure, goals, costs, and stakeholder reactions.
   - Conduct impact assessments to evaluate potential effects and identify the best strategy.

Example: Should governments offer tax breaks for building affordable urban housing? What are the potential effects?
Key Tip: Engage the public
- Publish a poll on social media to gather responses to the questions above.

3. Adoption
- The policy is adopted after appropriate approval (governmental, legislative, referendum).
- External experts often provide independent advice during decision-making.

Example: The government might implement a national policy to increase housing capacity, but changing laws requires a parliamentary vote.
Key Tip: Inform the public
- Compile a press release to inform the media about the adoption of the policy.
- Release a statement on your social media pages.

4. Implementation
- Ensure partners have resources and knowledge.
- Monitor to ensure correct implementation.

Example: Set up processes for building flats and tax benefits.
Key Tip: Announce partners
- Publish a statement on social media to announce the partners implementing the policy.

5. Evaluation
- Assess policy effectiveness and success.
- Identify unpredicted effects.

Example: Rwanda aims to increase its urban population by 35% by 2024 and create 150,000 new dwellings annually to meet future demand.
Key Tip: Share findings:
- Publish a case study on social media about the Rwanda programme.
- Hold an event and invite the media to cover the evaluation.

6. Support / Maintenance
- Develop, support, or terminate the policy.
- Assess if the policy remains effective or needs changes.
  Example: Evaluate if high-density housing policies should continue or shift focus to alternative solutions.
  Key Tip: Ongoing assessment
- Publish a statement on social media one year after policy adoption to review successes and challenges.

The policy cycle is a theoretical concept and may not always apply to every situation. Some stages might not be completed. However, you can use this framework to organise your research and leverage each step to publish content.

2.2 Identifying channels to publish your research

In the online course, you will learn to identify channels to publish research. This may include policymakers one-on-one, through social media, research visualisation platforms, websites, newsletters, and other media platforms for dissemination.

As a researcher, what channels have you used to communicate your research in the past?
There are various ways available to publish your research.

One-on-one - targeting policymakers

Through direct engagement – through calls for proposals on government or institution websites. Through networking events in person and online. Sign up to organisation online training events to share ideas. Partner universities and institutions - NELGA (uneca.org)

Social media

Use polls and surveys to pose questions and set the agenda. Use a policy cycle to publish each stage on social media. Facebook Live, or a similar platform, is a good way to gauge audience responses. See here: (1) Facebook

Website

A landing page/representation of an organisation with all key information in one place. See here: About us - NELGA (uneca.org)

Newsletter

As stated under Module 1, it's a great way to publish information directly to your audience and build a database. Newsletter - NELGA (uneca.org)

Events/traditional media

To invite media to an event, share press releases, which include direct quotes and research findings with the media. The 2023 Conference of Land Policy makes resounding call to action for inclusive and sustainable Land governance to boost Intra-Africa Trade | African Union (au.int)

3 MODULE 3: YOUR FUTURE IN RESEARCH COMMUNICATION

Learning objectives:

- Utilise key online communication tools to boost your visibility.
- Learn to fill the gap in land governance policy with original online content.
- Harness radio, podcasts, video and TV appearances to influence policy.

In this module, you will learn how to promote your research by building credibility through an online brand. You will also understand the importance of utilising different platforms to target different audiences. These include using radio, podcasts, video and TV to influence policy.

3.1 Creating content to promote your research and build an online brand

Here, you will learn why a website is the foundation of your online brand, why podcasts are a versatile tool and why content creation is a key factor in promoting your research.

There is a gap in online communication of the land governance policy discourse. Channels like YouTube show long recordings of conferences and events but only a little focus on in-depth discussions and interviews with land governance policy experts. Good researchers are continuously learning and consequently evolving. Researchers need to create awareness of their work and provide relevant and updated information which can influence policy in a digestible way. Building credibility online is vital to boost your visibility. This module takes you through content creation to draw attention to your research using strategic communications and shows you how to build a sustainable online brand.

Interviewing thought leaders on land governance policy using podcasts/video/TV/radio are all ways to build a brand. Offering an expert (yourself or from your organisation) to a TV channel or radio station is a great way to keep a policy debate alive and build your online brand simultaneously. One-on-one interviews with experts are very compelling. See here for an interview with SABC News, which was posted on YouTube: Land expropriation without compensation | Discussion with Peter Karungu and Ernst Van Zyl Part 1 (youtube.com)

Reflection: Ask yourself this question: Who would you like to interview to communicate your policy issue? Which channel would you use? Why not interview someone directly by podcasting? These actions all contribute to building your online brand.

3.1.1 Your online brand

Did you know that consumers are always looking for credible sources of information that share original and interesting data? As a researcher, establishing an online brand by creating original content to educate, persuade and inform target audiences will increase your exposure and help you build a strong reputation. This, in turn, leads to increased references to your sources, known as citations. As researchers develop larger audiences and become recognised as topic or thought leaders, clients will be more likely to approach them for work. Building a brand can be done by first designing a simple website, placing a title (your name or the name of your organisation), then populating the site with content including infographics summarising your research, podcasting, doing a Ted style talk, for example, and linking to your own YouTube channel. Just get started! Even if your content is not perfect at first, it will be in time!

3.1.2 Content creation

There are many different forms of content available to researchers today. Let's focus on podcasts as they are accessible and versatile. You can record an audio podcast and also publish it as a video. Many well-known content creators are doing just that. Publishing on Spotify and also on YouTube simultaneously. Things move quickly on the internet, so always research what your main competitors are doing and offer something different. Facts and figures and evidence-based data are often lacking in research. So why not make your content data-driven? Most content on YouTube about land governance policy are dry recordings of conferences or events. There is still very much a gap in communicating policy in a more compelling way, which can be done through podcasting. Building your own podcast/YouTube channel focussing on land governance policy backed up by data is still in its infancy and provides an opportunity for you to create specific content that offers something new. You can create content by recording interviews with opinion leaders, experts and representatives from organisations who can make inciteful contributions to your research and often have access to data. Podcasting is cheap to produce and can be published on multiple platforms for multiple target audiences. They are a fast and direct way to build your brand online. Online channels include Spotify/Apple Podcasts/YouTube/ LinkedIn/ TikTok/X/Threads, and many more. See here for some inspiration: Land Matters Podcast - Lincoln Institute of Land Policy Land Governance Podcast | XGFNG (xeni-gwetin.ca)

You can also generate content by contacting a TV channel and offering yourself or a representative from your organisation to appear on a TV talk show to express a policy issue. The same can be done on a radio station. TV and radio are always looking for content from experts in their field. Why not fill that gap by being an expert opinion or offering up someone in your organisation who is an expert opinion. Audiences are always interested in experts.

Ted-style talks are also very popular, so why not create your own talk on YouTube or a similar channel? These actions are, in effect, a form of lobbying, as you begin to raise awareness on policy issues and apply pressure on those accountable.

3.1.3 A word on a website

Websites form the foundation of everything you do online. You could place four simple headings on your website: Podcasts/Research/Events/About. These headings can then link to your work. Try to build a catalogue of podcasts (audio and video), contribute research in the form of policy briefs and report summaries, and work with organisations to launch events and invite traditional and influencers to attend by sending them a press release. You can build a website for free using WordPress or a similar system. They work as content management systems that allow you to use plugins and templates to build a blog, business website, online store, professional portfolio, or any other type of site you'd like. Find out more here: 21 Excellent WordPress Website Examples You Should Check Out (2024) (wpbeginner.com)

3.1.4 Get started

Write down one thing you are going to do to get started on your content creation and building your brand online. How are you going to do it? When are you going to do it? Are you going to book a time to interview an expert on a specific research topic you are working on? Are you going to create an online poll to gather opinions? Are you going to create a YouTube channel and begin filming your interviews? There are so many things you can do. Once you start the ball rolling, you will begin to build an online brand. Good luck!

3.2 Harnessing channels to present lectures and research work

In this section, you will reinforce your knowledge of the right channels of communication to present your work.

3.2.1 Lectures

A lecture citing quotations is a useful way of communicating your work verbally to a high-level audience. This tool works well at conferences and in learning institutions including universities.

Don't: BUT... avoid recording them and placing them online in their entirety, as a wider audience will not necessarily understand the content or context of the lecture. Currently, a lot of research is presented in this way online and, therefore, does not find an audience.

Do: Instead record a Ted style talk and load that onto your dedicated YouTube channel expressing highlights of your lecture presenting simple facts and figures and explaining why this information matters. This appeals to non-experts in the area.
Package content differently for different audiences. Don't alienate your audience with long lectures online or an entire recording of a conference.

3.2.2 Presenting your work

As explored in all three modules, there are many different ways to present your work. Extracting key information from experts in podcasts, putting up an expert on a TV talk show, organising an event and inviting the media to cover the event are all good ways to communicate. Creating a policy brief, a case study, a success story, an infographic, a factsheet, these are all useful ways to promote your work.

Become an expert: Everyone is looking for an expert who can explain often complex issues in an understandable way. Becoming an expert or communicating expert opinions from your organization is a very fast way to build credibility, promote your work and in turn influence policy.

3.3 Interview skills – when the media want to interview you

Before agreeing to an interview, it is important to know why an interview is being requested. This may be obvious if it is in response to a press release you have sent the media, but it is still important to check the following:

- What is the angle (your approach) or context of the interview?
- What is the likely line of questioning?
- Will it be live or recorded?
- Who is likely to be viewing or listening to the interview when it is broadcast (the target audience)?

Ask yourself if the interview is likely to be to your organisation's advantage or disadvantage. Will it help you achieve your overall communications objectives? Will it enable your organisation to communicate its key messages to its target audiences? Are there any negatives?

Many people want to know what questions will be asked. Do not be surprised if the journalist does not tell you. They may not know precisely what questions they will ask because they will need to react to what you say in the interview.

However, it is legitimate to ask what areas of questioning are going to come up.

You receive a phone call from a journalist. It is up to you to ask about the story's focus. Are you the right person to be interviewed, or is somebody else far better equipped to deal with the journalist's request?

What type of story is needed?

- TV or radio package, just a “soundbite,” video only?
- Print, feature, news?

Remember:

- Reporters want interviews TODAY.
- Return the reporter’s calls as soon as possible.

The six questions the media will want to ask you:

Journalists are often trained to ask the following questions, so it's a good idea to understand the topic of the interview and anticipate the questions you will be asked in line with the topic. You could even try rehearsing these questions beforehand with a work colleague or family member:

- Who will do, say or did something
- What will be done, was said or it happened
- Where it will be done, it was said, or it happened
- When it is done, it was said, or it happened
- Why it will be done, it was said, or it happened
- How it will affect people or how it was done

Preparing for an interview

The day or hour before the interview make sure you prepare thoroughly. Think carefully about the likely questions and responses.

- What is your overall communications objective? How will this interview contribute to your objectives?
- Think of human examples that illustrate the point you are trying to make. Real stories about real people are very powerful.
- What are your key messages? Will the messages be about the impact of an issue? Some facts which lead to a change? What facts do you wish your audience to remember?
- Do not intimidate yourself psychologically. Consider the impending interview as a discussion with someone about something you know about. Most journalists are generalists, not experts. You are the expert. That’s what journalists and the general public expect from you.
- Prepare talking points/communication points/key messages about the topic and list the topics several points you want to be made known about the topic.

Consider the various angles of each point to anticipate the interviewer's questions, and prepare the best replies possible by:

- Considering the thinking and expectations of your audience (the journalist and the general audience).
- Express ideas in terms an audience understands, putting across results, NOT processes.
- Find the humanity and human emotion in your topic.
- Express the story by putting across how ordinary people are affected.
- Know your subject/topic.
- Practice ahead of time.
- Prepare “block answers”.
- Have answers in mind.

Talking points

Talking points/communication points/key messages, whatever you wish to call them are vital to convey to an audience.

Once you have studied who your audience is going to be, for example if you are appearing on a TV talk show, it’s likely your audience will be professionals with an interest in your subject.

The next thing to do is prepare three messages you want people to know when you're finished giving your interview.

Identifying messages to be used in interviews:

What are the key messages?
Key messages are the core of your communication activities, in this case giving an interview. Key messages open the door to meaningful communications with your audience, because they bridge what your audience already knows and where you are trying to take them.

You have a story to tell through your interview—whether to educate, discuss, promote or advocate. Within every story, key messages are the messages you want your audience to remember and react to. They are the Message, the essence.

Key messages are a means to an end. They assert your organisation's viewpoint. Key messages are opinions that you can back up with proof and case examples, which you demonstrate verbally in your interview.

By prompting your readers to ask questions, key messages immediately get audiences involved in your issue.

Key messages prompt your audience to ask, "Why"? "How"? Etc... Key Messages get your audience curious about what you have to say. Curiosity is the first step to participation.

A key message is the thing you want people to remember after they have heard you being interviewed.

Key messages need to be simple and easy to grasp. This helps the audience understand what you are trying to say, but it also means you are more likely to remember them in the heat of doing a broadcast interview.

Examples of key messages could be:
We are working with farmers to improve livelihoods and reduce poverty. So far, over ten thousand households in the Southern Highlands have benefited.
We have supported organisations to train farmers to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change and results so far show crop yields have doubled despite the longer dry season.
We want people to engage via our website and blog about this project (so here is the web address)

In a three-minute broadcast interview, try to focus on getting across just three key messages. Any more than that will overwhelm an audience.

Soundbites
A soundbite is a term employed in TV and radio, used to describe a phrase which is easily picked up on by the media.

Sound bites are very short phrases that sound good and appear to sum up a point or express a situation.
Sound bites are for use mainly on radio and television, but they also work when quoted in print.
Can be a phrase extracted from a longer phrase or one specifically delivered to be a sound bite.

"The thing about hip-hop today is it's smart, it's insightful. The way they can communicate a complex message in a very short space is remarkable." – Barack Obama.

Read more https://www.yourfates.com/powerful-barack-obama-quotes/

Interview preparation guide

When a reporter calls you to request an interview, do the following:
Write down the topic that is to be covered on the top line of the Interview Preparation Guide.
Determine your key messages. What three ideas do you want to get across to the reporter? Write these in the Interview Preparation Guide below.
List three possible questions a reporter might ask. Be sure to prepare answers to these questions. Write questions and answers in the Interview Preparation Guide.
If time permits, before the interview, ask a friend to interview you about the topic in question.

Topic: ____

Key messages

1. ____
   ____
2. ____
   ____
3. ____
   ____

Possible Question	Your Response (Sound bite)
____________________ ____________________	____________________ ____________________
____________________ ____________________	____________________ ____________________
____________________ ____________________	____________________ ____________________

Physical appearance

For all interview situations, but most importantly for TV, your appearance precedes any responses you might give. The way you are dressed could influence the manner in which questions are asked and could influence the way replies are perceived by the audience.

Overdressing gives the impression of vanity, and any reply will be judged with that in mind. Bad dress combinations can give the perception of you as not being in control. If you can't dress yourself properly, how can you handle such topics?

Some patterns, such as close pinstripes or dotted material used to play havoc with analog TV screens. This isn't the case anymore but be careful with drawing attention away from what you have to say because the audience is focussing on that bright and colourful tie you are adorning.

Do not wear white in a television studio. The light balance will affect any dark complexion. Clunky, jingly jewellery interferes with audio and distracts viewers. You cause the audience to lose attentiveness.

Your comportment also plays a major part on how you come across in television and how you sound in radio. If you comport yourself to know everything you will sound pompous on radio and look like a faker on television. Aim to look like a professor – one who looks like s/he knows and speaks knowledgeably.

Show enthusiasm. Even in radio (and certainly for television) facial expressions and hand and body gestures affect the way you sound. The more physically animated you are, the more exciting you will sound. Do not overdo this at the risk of being “fake".

Forcing yourself to appear “cool and collected” usually leads to boring interviews. You can only pull this off if you really are cool and collected and extremely prominent and knowledgeable. Unfortunately, the perception for these attributes is not created by yourself.

Interview checklist

Here is a list of things to consider before your interview.

Interview Checklist:

- Familiar with the show, platform or publication?
- How will the interview be used?
- One source or one of many?
- Taped or live interview?
- On TV -- what to wear?
- Developed a conversational style?
- Rehearsed all possible questions and answers?
- Have concise key messages?
- Body language and facial expressions in control?
- No use of jargon?
- Have you prepared notes for your own reference?
- Are you prepared to answer questions without resorting to "no comment"?

During the interview

This section guides you on what to do and how to be during an interview. During the interview, imagine it is like a conversation between you (the expert) and someone who is interested in your work but does not know anything about it.

Focus on the person who is interviewing you and try to engage them in the subject. Make them interested by talking with passion and authority. Ignore all the surrounding technology, like a camera or microphone. Just talk to this one person. Do not think too hard about the audience. They are simply eavesdropping on your fascinating conversation. Remember, if you have on-air nerves, then, in essence, a live interview gives you more control as it cannot be edited.

Body language

For TV and video interviews on YouTube and for vlogs to be uploaded online, people will remember what they see more than what they hear, unfortunately. It is up for debate whether or not you believe this to be true.

Verbal 7 %

Non-verbal 93 %

You can persuade an audience to like you by appearing confident yet friendly and doing the following things:

- Don’t play with keys/change.
- Sit still or stand straight.
- Beware of swivel chairs!
- Eye contact should be with the reporter, not the camera.
- Look down as you consider a response, not up toward the sky.

- Keep your composure at the end of each answer.
- Don't roll your eyes.
- Whatever movements you make with your body and head, your eyes must be steady and should be trained on the interviewer. If they do move away, it should be in a naturally normal conversational way. Shifty eye movements result in a shifty perception of you.
- Any movements you make must not involve the furniture. Do not rock or swivel in your chair.

Speaking voice

The Iron lady, Britain's first female Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had speech lessons to lower the tone of her voice, so that she sounded more authoritative.

In terms of your voice, it is helpful to aim for:

- Distinct.
- Enunciate well.
- Pace/rate not too fast and not too slow.
- Inflection- avoid going up at the end of sentences.

Remember

- Be prepared. Prepare in advance the key ideas you wish to get across. Anticipate key questions and use those to express your objectives. Think of questions you would ask.
- Be positive; turn negative questions or statements into positive responses. Don't be curt.
- Be honest. Tell the truth. If you try to bluff, it will show. Your credibility is crucial.
- Be brief. Crystallise your ideas into a few short phrases that summarise what you're trying to communicate.
- Be yourself. Keep your voice at an even pace. Act naturally. Avoid technical language (jargon) or "big" words. It does not impress anyone.
- Be comfortable and confident and take charge. Relax. You know more about the story topic than the interviewer.
- Be energetic. Be animated to a degree. Use gestures, facial expressions and body language to add vitality to your words. (Just don't overdo it.) Keep your eyes steady.
- Be focused. Put your full attention on the interviewer. Look directly at the person asking the questions. Don't be concerned with distractions.
- Be prepared.
- Be positive.
- Be honest.
- Be brief.
- Be yourself!
- Responding to interview questions
- Make your responses as simple and short as possible without being curt.
- Always give the most important thing first in a brief response, then, if needed, expound.
- Do not add a different topic by straying in your replies. If the interview is cordial, let the interviewer lead.
- Stop speaking after you have completed your response. Don't keep talking just because the interviewer appears to expect more.
- During the interview, do not keep thanking the interviewer. Leave that for the very end of the interview.
- Do not reply to a question by referring to an earlier response: "Like I said earlier…"
- If you momentarily have to think about how to phrase a reply, be silent while you think. Do not fill the time with "er…, ah…, um…"
- Being an expert means that you are safe to say you don't know. But do expound on why you are not in a position to know about something.
- Do not reply to questions on behalf of another party (surrogate spokesperson). The way you present a fact on their behalf may not be the way they would wish it.

- Do not reply to hypothetical questions as fact. Best not to respond to them at all unless it is clear in the spirit of the interview that it is hypothetical, and your hypothetical response is hypothetically your personal opinion. The rule of thumb is: don't respond.

Remember

Don't keep talking.
Let reporter fill "dead air."
Pause after complete statements.
Practice information management.
Don't speculate. Stick to your subject. ("What do you think would happen if…?")

For broadcast interviews

Short answers (20 seconds or less) if videotaped. Longer for studio interview.
Stay seated after the interview.
Assume you are "live" at all times.

Handling tricky questions

Some interviewers can become hostile; others are just uninformed. Don't get caught in an emotional or intellectual game with the interviewer. Following are some "interviewer types" and question traps and some responses you may want to try. Handling tricky questions is easier if you prepare for the worst-case scenario and rehearse beforehand. Remember it's highly unlikely you will get an interviewer who wants to put you in a bad light.

Interviewer types

Machine Gunner. Asks so many questions that you don't know which one to answer first.

Response: "Well, you've asked several interesting questions. First, I'd like to address..."

Interrupter. Jump in before you've had a chance to complete your response.

Response: Let him complete the interruption, then say: "Before I answer that, I'd like to complete my thought."

Paraphrase. Tries to put words in your mouth, e.g., "Do you mean to sit there and tell me there's no problem with..."

Response: "No, that isn't what I said. What I said was..." and repeat your point.

Unprepared Interviewer. May have vague questions or require you to provide a lot of background before you can get to your key message.

Response: Take the opportunity to steer the interview in the direction you want to go. Rephrase the question to make it more specific. "By your question, I think you're referring to...let me put that in perspective."

Strategies for handling question traps

Either/Or. When the answer is not "black or white," say so.

Absent Party. Don't get trapped into being a spokesperson for another individual, business, or organisation or into criticising an absent person or organisation.

False Statement. Correct incorrect information immediately. Don't repeat the misinformation; this only reinforces it.

Hypothetical. You do not have to answer a question that is hypothetical or conditional. It presents a scenario that never occurred.

Crisis communication

Your organisation may be called in to respond to a crisis you may be directly or indirectly involved in.

In a crisis:

- Don't get angry.
- Don't nod in agreement that you understand the question when the answer will be negative.
- Stay "on the record."
- Deal with rumours swiftly.
- No "no comments."
- Be prepared.
- You're the expert.
- Concentrate.
- Practice.
- Take a deep breath.
- Prepare your voice. (No cola, chocolate or milk/dairy.)

On the record

You should treat any discussion with a journalist as 'on the record', which means they might use it in a story. Just because an interviewer has closed a notebook or switched off a recorder, it does not mean they have stopped being a journalist.

If you have a very good relationship with a specific journalist it may be possible to fill them in off the record on some background which may help them to understand a controversial aspect of the story. But only do this rarely and if you are completely confident that they will respect your confidentiality.

After the interview

Interview evaluation:
After you have been interviewed, you should evaluate how well you did before you do another interview. Here are some questions you may wish to ask yourself to evaluate your performance.

Did you:

- Communicate your objective using key messages?
- Create soundbites (short/snappy/memorable quotations)?
- Keep control of the interview?
- Remain calm?
- Listen carefully to questions?
- Bridge from hostile or irrelevant questions?
- Use short, succinct sentences?
- Maintain credibility?
- Keep good eye contact with the interviewer?
- Control body gestures -- use hand motions appropriately, and stop that shaking leg?
- Project a strong, positive image of a person people would trust?

Final tips!

By following these final "Be Attitudes," you should be successful in any interview setting:

- Be prepared. Prepare in advance two or three key ideas you wish to get across. Anticipate key issues that will come up during the interview and be prepared to use those issues to launch your objectives. Think of questions you would ask.
- Be positive. Turn negative questions or statements into positive responses. End every answer on a positive, upbeat note.
- Be honest. Always tell the truth. If you don't and try to bluff, it will show. Your credibility is crucial.
- Be brief. Crystallise your ideas into a few short phrases that summarise what you're trying to communicate.
- Be yourself. Keep your voice at an even pace. Act naturally.
- Be energetic and animated. Use gestures, facial expressions, and body language to add vitality to your words. (Just don't overdo it).
- Be focused. Direct your full attention on the interviewer. Look squarely at the person asking the questions. Don't be concerned with distractions.
- Be comfortable, confident and take charge. Relax. You know more about the story topic than the interviewer. If not, you wouldn't be interviewed.

CONCLUSION

It's not how good you are; it's how good you want to be. Enthusiasm and passion for your work go a long way to persuading people to take action. Content creation using evidence-based data and findings is at the heart of becoming a well-respected researcher who is in demand and good at promoting their work. Start by building your website and populating it with links to content. In turn, people will begin to amplify your work on their platforms, creating a multiplier effect.