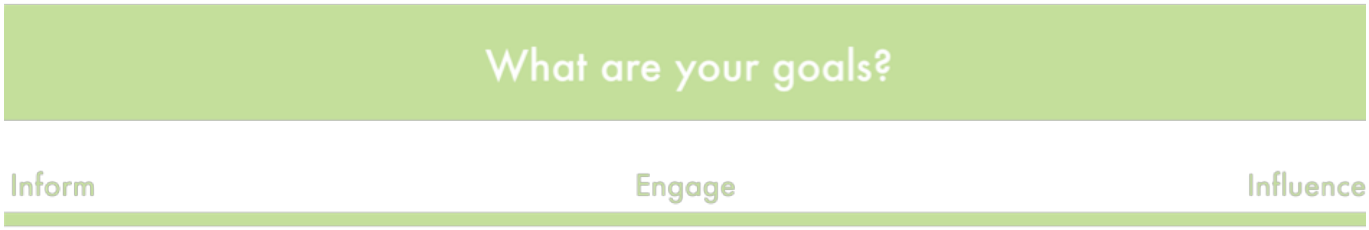
What are Your Goals

Where to Begin

Begin a communication strategy at the start of your research process and revisit it throughout. Teams who have continually updated their messaging or communication strategy throughout the research process have found it helpful in refocusing the team's direction around their research questions.



Align your communication goals with your research plan. Your proposal likely includes short- or long-term outcomes that may be aimed at informing policy or testing the understanding of a specific model or theory. These outcomes likely exist along a spectrum of engagement, from advancing ideas and informing audiences to influencing behavior change and can be a guide for designing your overall communication strategy.

What is the problem, issue, or question that you are asking and addressing in your research?

- Why is that problem interesting and important? (i.e. **So what?**)
- How does your work connect with a **broader disciplinary conversation** about this topic/problem in your field, and what does the synthesis work add to that conversation?

Identify concise and specific goals. The goals you develop will guide your strategy for broader engagement, and therefore should be as specific as possible.

- If your research provides a significant step forward on an issue, it is likely to also be very technical. That means you need to work harder at communicating it clearly and unambiguously.
- For example, if your research is to better understand and inform decision makers about the ecological impacts of dams across North America, a complementary communication goal could be to meet in-person with policymakers in order to provide critical information revealed in your research process that formerly was not confirmed.
- Another research goal might be to change the business practices of a specific industry along a supply chain, and the communication goal might be to inform stakeholders at a specific company in the industry of how the practices are impacting them, the environment, and society.

Two issues in science communication: jargon and concepts.

- **Jargon**: Communication products ideally do not include jargon; however, synthesis research often includes very technical language that is integral to translation, therefore you will need to clearly explain specific terms used in your research, such as Gram positive or Gram negative, with examples.
- **Concepts**: It is useful to develop some metaphors to communicate concepts, accepting that no metaphor is perfect.

Action verbs:

- Express relationships among these key nouns by using action verbs.
- Describe the *movement* of your work and the *activity* or *action* of your involvement.

The following table of *action verbs* can help you describe broad concepts.

Analysis:	Application:	Synthesis:	Evaluation:
- analyze - define - categorize - classify - compare - contrast - systematize	- apply - argue - articulate - conclude - defend - demonstrate - differentiate - employ - establish - extend - hypothesize - illustrate - implement - propose - theorize	- combine - construct - create - design - formulate - frame - integrate - merge - project - solve - synthesize - unite	- critique - defend - evaluate - interpret - justify - reassess - re-envision

Source: University of Notre Dame:
https://graduateschool.nd.edu/assets/76988/elevator_pitch_8_28_2012.pdf [1]

Actionable Science as a Guide

SESYNC encourages teams to integrate knowledge users, including practitioners and decision-makers from outside academia, directly into the research process. Co-development of research questions and agenda can ensure your outcomes are actionable. Forging relationships with knowledge users is a critical strategy for actionable science; however, it may not be possible to integrate everyone. Your goals for actionable science can be a template as you design your communication products, preferably at the beginning of a synthesis process.

Goals of Actionable Science

- Inform decisions at the government, business, and household level.
- Improve the design or implementation of public policies.
- Influence public and/or private sector strategies, planning, and behaviors that affect the environment.

Next Step in the Toolkit: Who are Your Audiences [2]

Links
[1] https://graduateschool.nd.edu/assets/76988/elevator_pitch_8_28_2012.pdf
[2] https://www.sesync.org/for-you/communications/toolkit/who-is-your-audience