

Outreach Options for Rapid Response Research Program Projects

A number of different options are available for communicating Rapid Response Research Program (RRR) project results, including research reports, Webcasts, conference presentations, journal articles, and others. Each outreach method has criteria and considerations that should be taken into account prior to selecting that particular method for a project. Considerations include target audience, the desired delivery time to users, cost, resources required/available, and longevity or shelf-life of the end product, among others. Below are listed a number of outreach options that applicants may consider in developing the Outreach Plan for a RRR project, as well as the related important considerations.

OUTREACH OPTIONS
Print
Standard Water Research Foundation final report
Non-standard final report
Journal article
Summary report
Electronic
Webcast
Web-based product
Software
Multimedia/Other
PowerPoint presentation
Conference presentation
Targeted e-mail
Workshop or targeted briefing

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPECIFIC OUTREACH OPTIONS

Print

Standard Water Research Foundation final report

A standard Water Research Foundation final report should be considered for many Foundation projects. The content and format requirements for standard Foundation final reports are set forth in the *Format-Style Guide*, which is available on the Foundation Web site at <http://www.WaterResearchFoundation.org/research/projectAdmin/docs/FormatStyleGuide.pdf>. The Water Research Foundation publishes all standard final reports on the Foundation Web site as an electronic (pdf) file, and also prepares and distributes printed copies of selected final reports. Printed final reports sometimes include a CD-ROM with supplemental data, spreadsheets, photographs, and other types of information that are more appropriate to be viewed electronically or are too expensive to print. The Foundation will cover the costs of publishing, printing, and distributing the standard Foundation final report outside of the project budget.

Non-standard final report

A non-standard final report could be formatted like a manual or workbook, and range in size from 6” x 9” to the standard Foundation size of 8 1/2” x 11”. This type of report would most likely not follow the Foundation’s style according to the *Format-Style Guide* and may consist of more color than normally used. Format and style details will be resolved on a project-specific basis. Similar to the standard final report, the Foundation will cover the costs of publishing, printing, and distributing non-standard final reports outside of the project budget.

Journal article

The principal investigator (PI) could submit an article to a journal as a project deliverable. Articles must acknowledge the Foundation for sponsoring the research. A journal article generally is not desirable as the sole final deliverable because the Foundation will either have to share or forfeit copyright of the information to the journal publisher. However, a journal article may be appropriate as a means to communicate the research results to a particular technical audience.

Summary Report

A summary report could be produced when either (1) the research results would be more effectively presented to a Foundation audience in a concise format, or (2) the results do not warrant a full Foundation report. The summary report should be around 35 to 50 pages and could either follow the standard report formatting guidelines according to the Foundation’s *Format-Style Guide* or be formatted as a non-standard final report. It may also be more expedient and cost-effective to post the summary report on the Foundation’s Web site instead of printing. Format, details, and delivery methods will be resolved on a project-specific basis. Similar to the standard final report, the Foundation will cover the costs of publishing, printing, and distributing summary reports outside of the project budget.

Electronic

Webcast

A Webcast could be used to distribute the project results directly from the PI to Foundation subscribers. The Foundation conducts Webcasts routinely to communicate information to subscribers and other stakeholders, and it is generally understood that a Webcast to communicate project-specific findings will be hosted by the Foundation in coordination with the project research team. The Foundation will cover the cost of hosting project-specific Webcasts outside of the project budget.

Web-Based Products

Sometimes a research project results in the development of a Web-based product that can provide ongoing project updates, photos, discussion forums, and even survey instruments or application-like functionality. However, only selected projects justify development of a Web site, Web tool, or Web application. There are associated costs and implementation details for the researcher and the Foundation to consider. The project proposal should factor in costs and resources required for developing, testing, hosting, and maintaining a Web-based product. The Foundation and the researcher(s) should consider and agree on the following issues before the Web-based product is created: researcher has the resources, time, and budget to develop and test the product; technical support has been agreed upon; researcher will update the product when necessary over a set number of years; if the product is hosted on a researcher Web site, the site will either be able to authenticate Foundation subscribers or Foundation subscribers will be able to access the tool through a link from the Foundation’s Web site. For additional information and considerations, see the document “Web-Based Product Criteria And Feasibility Study For Water Research Foundation Project Deliverables” <http://www.waterresearchfoundation.org/research/projectAdmin/docs/WebSiteCriteriaFeasibilityStudy.doc>

Software

Software may be a desired option to allow end users to calculate information based on their system- or organization-specific data. The Foundation and the researcher(s) should consider and agree on the following issues before the software is created: researcher has the resources, time, and budget to develop and test the software; technical support has been agreed upon; demonstration of beta software showed user acceptance; minimum system and technical requirements of users, etc. For additional information and considerations, see the document “CD-ROM and Software Criteria for Water Research Foundation Project Deliverables”

<http://www.WaterResearchFoundation.org/research/projectAdmin/docs/SoftwareCriteria.pdf>

Multimedia/Other

PowerPoint presentation

A PowerPoint presentation could be developed that summarizes the main findings of the project and their relevance to Foundation subscribers. The Foundation could then make the presentation available to subscriber representatives as an effective means to share information about the project within their utility or organization. A PowerPoint presentation generally will not be the primary final deliverable for a project, but may be a very effective supplemental deliverable for disseminating results to a broad audience within the Foundation’s subscriber base.

Conference presentation

The PI may propose to present results at a conference(s). Similar to the above description for journal articles, a conference presentation generally is not desirable as the sole final deliverable because the Foundation will either have to share or forfeit copyright of the information. However, a conference presentation may be appropriate as a means to quickly release the research results to a particular technical audience prior to the publication of a final report or similar final deliverable. Presentations must acknowledge the Foundation for sponsoring the research.

Targeted e-mail

The Foundation can distribute project results via broadcast e-mail to our subscribers and other stakeholders. Consideration should be given to whether the length and format of the material is appropriate for e-mail, which is most effective when used for shorter amounts of text (e.g., one page) and/or links to information contained on the Web. Targeted email to communicate project-specific findings will be hosted by the Foundation in coordination with the project research team. The Foundation will cover the cost of hosting project-specific targeted email outside of the project budget. Please note that the Foundation cannot provide subscriber email addresses or other contact information to researchers. The Foundation also does not have access to membership contact lists for other organizations, including AWWA.

Workshop or targeted briefing

The PI may propose to present project findings or demonstrate tools developed through a project to a particular audience(s) in a workshop or briefing. This may be in conjunction with a conference or other organized event, or may be a stand-alone activity scheduled specifically for this purpose. Such meetings may be an effective and efficient means to transfer project results to specific target audiences. The project proposal should factor in the cost and resources of arranging, preparing for, and traveling to present any planned workshop or briefing.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

- A project may warrant more than one outreach option. Some of the outreach options may be combined, such as standard final report and Webcast, non-standard final report and conference presentation, software and white paper, and so forth.

- Interim outreach activities (i.e., prior to completion of research and submittal of the final report or other deliverable) are encouraged where appropriate. Any interim outreach activities must be coordinated through the Foundation, and the associated content must be reviewed by the project advisory committee (PAC) prior to dissemination.
- Determination must be made during project contracting that the costs of proposed deliverables are available in the project funds. If any costs are to be absorbed by the Foundation, the Foundation must approve this prior to the start of the project.
- The research team should have the technology, equipment, time, budget, and staff resources to develop, test, and produce or review any proposed deliverable. If the Foundation staff and/or resources are involved, the Foundation must approve the extent of involvement and any associated costs prior to project start.
- The Foundation must review (and/or test as appropriate) and accept all deliverables prior to dissemination.
- All printable pages (e.g., PDF pages), whether on a CD-ROM, Web site, etc., must include the following footnote: **Source: [report title] by [author] © [year] Water Research Foundation. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.**
- Intellectual property agreements must be in place to cover final deliverables.
- PI must obtain copyright permission to use third-party materials, graphics, or other information.
- PI resources should be available for after-delivery support of the deliverable. If the Foundation is to handle support, the Foundation must approve the extent of support and any associated costs prior to project start.
- The Foundation should be recognized as the sponsoring organization of the research, as outlined in “Guidelines for Supporting Resources” (<http://www.WaterResearchFoundation.org/research/projectAdmin/docs/SupportingResources/ResourceGuidelines.pdf>). The Foundation logo should be displayed on all deliverables.