

## USING “RESEARCH SNAPSHOTS”: GUIDANCE NOTE

### WHAT IS IT?

An R2HC template which can help you write a 2–page summary of your funded research. The Snapshot is primarily designed to support researchers to engage with policymakers and practitioners, and other non–technical, non–academic audiences.

R2HC’s Research Snapshot template has been developed in consultation with the University of Victoria, Canada (a top research university globally, with a strong focus on research impact). Many universities around the world are now using similar tools to support researchers to communicate their findings effectively to wider audiences.

### WHO IS IT FOR?

Any R2HC research teams who want an easy way of communicating their research findings in an accessible, short summary form can use the Snapshot. From Call 6 onwards, research teams are required to complete a Research Snapshot when they come to the end of their grant, and to submit it to R2HC for publication on our website.

### HOW WOULD I USE A RESEARCH SNAPSHOT?

- Print out copies to give to audiences at dissemination events and presentations.
- Take it to meetings with key stakeholders; or send it over in advance to inform the conversation.
- You can create different Snapshots for different audiences, EG: providing information relevant to a specific organisation or country.
- Send people a link or attachment; or put in your email signature/on your website– to easily connect people with your research online.
- **Note:** The Snapshot will be most effective in communicating key messages as part of a wider strategic process of engagement with a target stakeholder. Writing a good Snapshot requires that you understand your target audience’s needs, priorities and interests.

### WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS FOR MY RESEARCH PROJECT?

- Humanitarian policymakers and practitioners are busy and time–poor– they are unlikely to read a full journal article. Making sure they can read your key messages quickly and understand them easily is essential. The Snapshots are 2 pages long– designed to send clear direct messages about your findings. It provides answers to questions that these stakeholders are likely to ask.
- The writing process helps you and your team figure out the most important findings you want to communicate– this is helpful for all your research uptake activities.
- Having a Snapshot online makes your research accessible and visible to new audiences, giving you the chance for increased uptake of findings– and perhaps bringing new opportunities.

### HOW R2HC WILL USE THE SNAPSHOTS

- Snapshots will be added to your project page on our website and may be linked in newsletters.
- We may also share them with key R2HC stakeholders: such as R2HC donors, Advisory Group, Funding Committee and Senior Staff; and other humanitarian stakeholders in our network.

## WHAT NEXT?

### To write a Snapshot for your research project yourself:

- Once you have findings you are ready to share, complete a first draft and send it to us. Please also tell us if you have a deadline by when you need the Snapshot.
- There is in-built guidance on how to write your Snapshot which should make it easy to use!
- R2HC will provide feedback and guidance on your draft, to ensure it's readable, clear, and communicates your messages effectively. (This review needs to be complete before the final draft goes on our website.) The writing and review process could take 2–3 weeks from first draft to completion.
- You will get the Snapshot in PDF to keep and use/print – and a Word version you can update and amend as needed.
- If needed, we can support you to plan and write the first draft. This might take a little longer – so please try and give adequate notice if you need the Snapshot for a specific deadline. Contact: Cordelia Lonsdale, Research Impact Manager [c.lonsdale@elrha.org](mailto:c.lonsdale@elrha.org)

## WRITING A SNAPSHOT: TOP TIPS

- **Before you start writing**, make sure you can answer the following questions: Who do I want to read the snapshots? (Specifically, who is your target audience)? Which of my findings and insights will interest them? What do I want this audience to do, or do differently – as a result of reading this Snapshot?
- You might find you have more than one distinct audience – and that doing different versions of the same Snapshots will be easier than trying to write for all your audiences at once!
- Use short sentences, and simple words (try not to use jargon!). Spell out acronyms. Headings can help signpost key messages.
- Try and pitch writing style and content as if writing for a class of smart, reasonably well-informed undergraduates.
- Keep the title to < 15 words – otherwise it will be difficult to read.
- The template is designed with a target audience of humanitarian policymakers in mind. Therefore, we recommend you don't alter it significantly. However, headings are editable if you want to adapt for a specific audience, for example changing 'humanitarian policymakers' to 'policymakers in Sierra Leone' or 'nutrition practitioners'. (Snapshots for publication on the R2HC website should remain generic/standard though).
- Ideally you wouldn't include much data but instead, convey the meaning of your findings in words. If pre-empting data to be published in a journal is still a concern, just word the 'findings' section with whatever you feel comfortable sharing. It can be updated once you've published. Remember: policymakers are usually more interested in information than data. (There are a few exceptions, such as if data show that an intervention meets an accepted standard the policymaker is familiar with).

## USING THE TEMPLATE

- We suggest you save the original template and don't write over it, so it's there for reference while writing – helpful in case you accidentally delete a text box, etc.
- You might find it easier to draft text in a blank word document, then copy and paste into text boxes. You also need to line text boxes up by eye (don't overspill the print margins).
- The template is designed to be printed in colour. However, it should be OK in black and white.
- If you've got ideas about how we could improve the template, please contact us.