The CARIAA RiU Learning Guide

Background and Context

CARIAA has three program objectives which are, together, expected to achieve the program's outcome. That expected outcome is that "actors in planning, programme, policy and research use a range of evidence-based, tested options to design, commission and implement adaptation initiatives to support communities' livelihoods in "hot spot" regions, in ways that benefit the most vulnerable". The second of these objectives is to "promote uptake of adaptation research by stakeholders in policy, practice and research by ensuring access to, and facilitated opportunities to engage with, a new body of quality evidence". We refer to the uptake of research which contributes to a change in policy or practice as Research-into-Use (RiU).

CARIAA's strong focus on RiU is novel for research programmes and in many instances the researchers involved have limited previous experience in RiU. Research uptake and RiU can be strongly connected to the research process itself, for example through the use of participatory or co-productive research methods for designing research, gathering evidence and doing analysis, which can increase the uptake of research at the earliest stages. There are also a range of activities that can be undertaken alongside evidence gathering that promote RiU (Figure 1), and which feature strongly in CARIAA activities. The expectation of actively promoting research uptake requires many researchers to move out of their comfort zones and incorporate new processes, approaches and communication mechanisms into and alongside their research. This change provides good opportunities for learning, specifically with regard to:
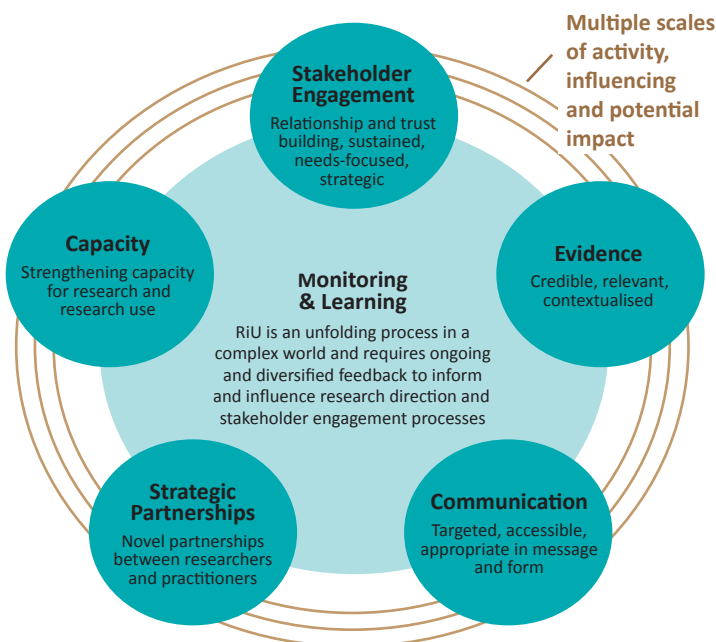
(a) What works and does not work in terms of promoting uptake of research amongst diverse stakeholders and across different geographical locations;

(b) How researchers from different disciplines backgrounds approach RiU differently across the consortia;

(c) How skills can be built in this arena - both for the CARIAA team members, and for targeted stakeholders, and lastly;

(c) How management of RiU can be made adaptive in order to incorporate lessons learned.

The emphasis on RiU offers not only an opportunity to learn, but also an opportunity for increased collaboration across the four CARIAA consortia. Independent of research themes and locations, key aspects of RiU such as stakeholder engagement, communication, the development of strategic partnerships and capacity development (see Figure 1), can and should be tracked and leveraged in order to maximise the program's effectiveness in engaging and influence decision-makers and other stakeholders in support of program objectives. A coordinated approach to tracking and learning from RiU could also reveal opportunities to influence policy and practice collectively.

Figure 1: Key areas of activity to achieve Research into Use in CARIAA, highlighting the multiple scales of potential impact

Program Learning Questions on RiU

The CARIAA program has a number of thematic learning questions in its M&E and Learning Framework that pertain to stakeholder engagement and RiU, including:

Q 1.2: How effective are the consortia at reaching into networks of stakeholders and intended research users?

Q 4: What has influenced stakeholders' demand for adaptation evidence, evidence-based policy and planning options? What are the factors or capacities that enable or inhibit them from acting on new knowledge? What can we learn about the appropriate ways of engaging different stakeholders groups – e.g. in hot spot regions, in sub-national, national, regional and international policy, planning and practice processes?

Support for Learning on RiU

Euforic Services has been contracted to assist in strengthening the RiU tracking and learning processes across the CARIAA programme. This effort should complement rather than duplicate the existing CARIAA M&E and Learning Framework, and should help consortia to better understand the effectiveness--and inefficiencies--of different approaches to RiU. Further, this proposed learning approach will help to facilitate adaptive management by providing guidance for adjusting RiU activities in ways that maximise the likelihood of achieving their desired impacts.

Methodology for Developing the Approach

The Euforic Services team used an inductive approach to developing this learning approach and Guide, drawing from existing consortium and programme practice. This involved conducting interviews with CARIAA members and undertaking a review of consortium and programme-level strategy documents to take stock of current RiU processes and strategies. From this we identified key themes which cut across all five strategies (four CARIAA consortia plus CARIAA programme-level) as well as gaps where consortia have not yet identified ways for tracking or learning from RiU practice. The results are summarised below.

Understanding RiU Activities and Reflective Moments in CARIAA

Framing RiU Activities in CARIAA

The framing for the RiU learning approach sits upon two axes that can broadly be understood as the "how" and the "why" of RiU in CARIAA (see Figure 2).

- **RiU activity type**: This relates to the common ways that CARIAA consortia engage in RiU (the "how" of RiU). The five core types of activities identified are:

- **Stakeholder engagement**: Strategic interactions with targeted stakeholders aimed at promoting the use of CARIAA concepts, findings or messages, and identifying stakeholder needs. Sustained interactions should build relationships and trust.

- **Capacity development**: Strengthening the research capacity of CARIAA, its partners, and other targeted institutions. Stimulating the use of CARIAA concepts, findings or messages by building the skills of targeted stakeholders through trainings, workshops, and similar interventions.

	Anticipated Outcome (*Why*)		
Activity Type (*How*)	**Awareness**	**Endorsement**	**Demand**
Stakeholder Engagement	Public seminars	Workshop for adaptation researchers	Help desk for stakeholders
Capacity Building	Include CARIAA tools and concepts in wider capacity building activities		Tools training for policy makers
Knowledge Management & Communications	Produce brochures	"Manifesto" or advocacy	
Strategic Partnerships	Partner with media	Partner with global leaders	Partner with intermediary groups who shape policy
Evidence production as an input to, and outcome of, effective RiU activities			

Figure 2: Illustrative examples of RiU activities and outcomes in CARIAA

- **Communication**: Combining, synthesising and tailoring CARIAA concepts into appropriate messages in appropriate formats for communication through relevant channels for targeted stakeholders.

- **Strategic partnerships**: Novel partnerships for more impactful RiU between CARIAA researchers and other relevant actors, such as NGOs, knowledge brokers and intermediaries.

Additional elements of RiU identified include monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and evidence production. We have excluded M&E, given that the overall purpose of this learning approach is to support M&E processes that track RiU activities. Including it risks creating redundancies.

Further, this framing assumes that credible, relevant, and contexualized evidence, or research is a key component of effective RiU, but that the RiU activities described above can and should be initiated before all evidence is in hand.

- **Anticipated Outcome**: This relates to the levels or types of RiU outcomes that are sought, as described in the CARIAA theory of change, and also highlighted in some consortium RiU or M&E strategies (the "why" of RiU). These three levels are:

- **Awareness**: Targeted stakeholders become aware of core CARIAA concepts, findings, or messages, by accessing knowledge products or through engagement activities (presentations, trainings, etc.).

- **Endorsement**: Targeted stakeholders endorse CARIAA concepts, findings and messages, either explicitly or implicitly. This could be by referencing them, using them, or building on them.

- **Demand**: Targeted stakeholders express demand for additional, expanded, or tailored CARIAA work or engagement, building on the programme's concepts, findings, and messages.

This framing should facilitate reflection and exchange around approaches to RiU, as well as the outcomes they lead to.

Structure: Timing of Reflection on RiU in CARIAA

RiU is a process that unfolds over time, but which also has very clear "moments" of engagement. For example, a consortium might organise a workshop for local planners to encourage them to apply specific tools or evidence in their planning processes. While it may take longer than the event itself to achieve this outcome, the workshop is itself a key moment of engagement. Effective RiU needs to think strategically about not only these events themselves, but also how they fit into a broader "pathway to impact".

We have developed a timeline of key reflective moments within both RiU and programme delivery processes in CARIAA (see Figure 3). These moments offer timely opportunities for reflection and learning and we propose structuring the learning approach upon them. Doing so, we believe, offers opportunities to build reflection and learning processes into existing systems, making the processes less burdensome and useful to different areas of work (such as M&E). The diagram below sets out some of these reflective moments, and the extent to which they feature in consortium and programme-level plans.
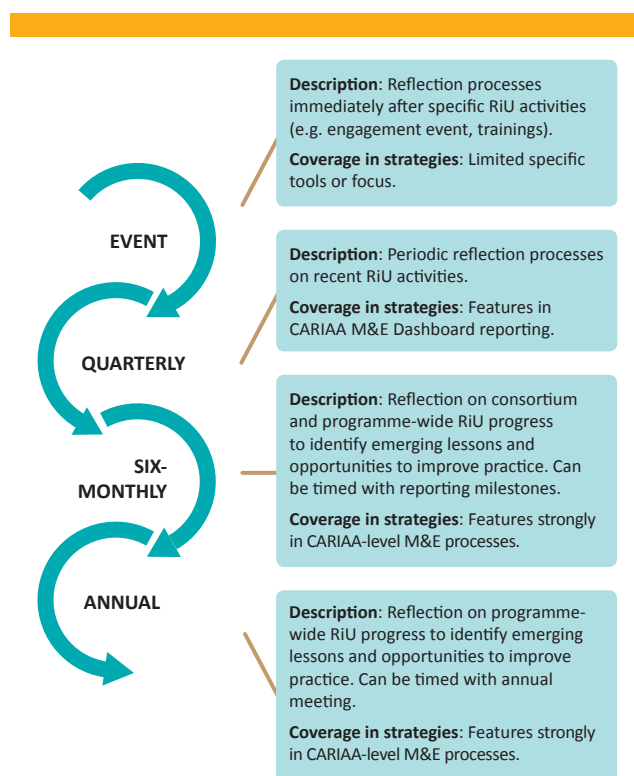
EVENT

Description: Reflection processes immediately after specific RiU activities (e.g. engagement event, trainings).

Coverage in strategies: Limited specific tools or focus.

QUARTERLY

Description: Periodic reflection processes on recent RiU activities.

Coverage in strategies: Features in CARIAA M&E Dashboard reporting.

SIX-MONTHLY

Description: Reflection on consortium and programme-wide RiU progress to identify emerging lessons and opportunities to improve practice. Can be timed with reporting milestones.

Coverage in strategies: Features strongly in CARIAA-level M&E processes.

ANNUAL

Description: Reflection on programme-wide RiU progress to identify emerging lessons and opportunities to improve practice. Can be timed with annual meeting.

Coverage in strategies: Features strongly in CARIAA-level M&E processes.

Figure 3: "Reflection moments" for RiU in CARIAA

Link to CARIAA's Stories of Change Process

Figure 4 below offers a rough illustration of the links between the RiU learning and stories of change. RiU learning offers an evidence-base from which emerging stories of change can be sourced as participants reflect upon the successes or challenges of their engagements. At the same time, consortium members involved in stories of change can document their learning from selecting, producing and sharing these stories and can use the RiU learning guide to capture lessons about what contributes to effective communication and uptake of research.
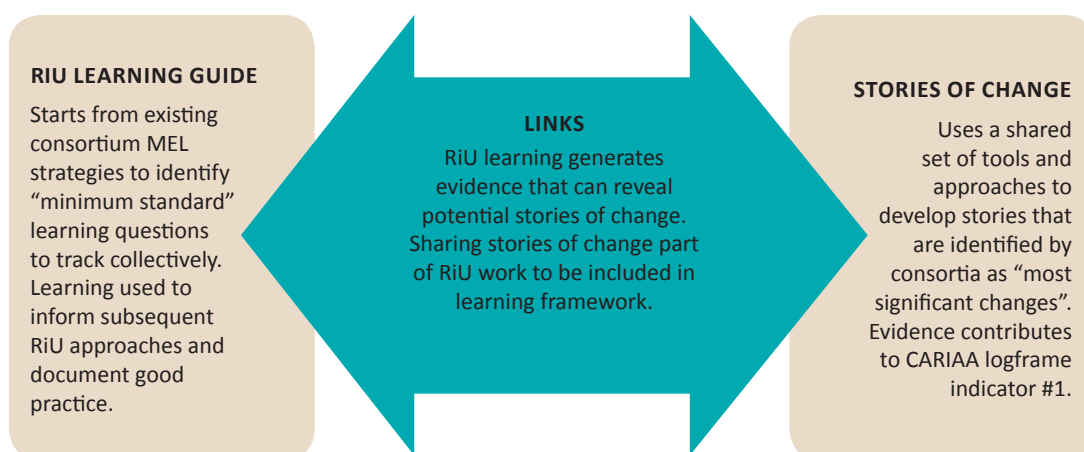
RIU LEARNING GUIDE

Starts from existing consortium MEL strategies to identify "minimum standard" learning questions to track collectively. Learning used to inform subsequent RiU approaches and document good practice.

LINKS
RiU learning generates evidence that can reveal potential stories of change. Sharing stories of change part of RiU work to be included in learning framework.

STORIES OF CHANGE

Uses a shared set of tools and approaches to develop stories that are identified by consortia as "most significant changes". Evidence contributes to CARIAA logframe indicator #1.

Figure 4: Links between RiU Learning and Stories of Change.

Guidance for Reflection Moments

A core assumption for this learning guide is that at the level of individual events, the CARIAA programme and consortium work is characterised by great diversity, which would make it difficult to have "one-size-fits-all" guidance for learning and reflection. However, at longer timescales (six-monthly, annually), consortia undertake some very similar stock-taking processes, largely coinciding with reporting and meeting timelines. We have designed the learning and reflection guidance accordingly, providing a more flexible set of tools for event-level reflection, with guidance being increasingly structured as we move toward annual processes. The guidance is summarized in Figure 5 on the following page.

Incorporating a range of perspectives: Natural scientists and social scientists may have different experiences regarding getting research into use, due to the different ways in which their fields typically interact with policymakers. These different perspectives can be sought out in reflection sessions, to help all stakeholders have a more comprehensive picture of the factors that are important for RiU in CARIAA.

Internal learning vs. learning with external stakeholders: The timeline of reflection moments above is primarily aimed at capturing and using internal learning about research-into-use. This internal learning includes both personal transformations, as well as the collective learning journey. That said, exploring learning with and by external stakeholders is also important. This guide can also be used as a tool for understanding changes in external stakeholders' access to, engagement with and capacity to understand and use CARIAA research.

Figure 5. Guidance for reflection moments

Reflection Format	Focus Questions	Supporting Tools
Event-by-event Who: These reflections would be done by teams leading the event in question. Pre-event: Pre-event planning template for teams. Post-event: After Action Review questions. Subset of responses can be reported within CARIAA Engagement Event reporting in the M&E Dashboard.	Pre-event: 1. Who are we aiming to engage? Why [linking to your consortium's overall theory of change]? 2. What kind(s) of outcome(s) do we hope this engagement will contribute to directly/indirectly? [think of the three levels of RiU outcomes in CARIAA] 3. Does the design of this event/activity target these specific stakeholders and outcomes? How? 4. How will we know if we have been successful? Immediately after event: 1. Did we engage the people we had aimed to engage? If not, why not? 2. What worked well? What worked less well? 3. What should we do differently next time? 4. What is our biggest lesson learned from this event?	Pre-event planning template. Question cards to guide face to face reflections using an After Action Review approach. Optional reflection questions integrated into event reporting forms on the CARIAA M&E Dashboard.
Quarterly Who: These reflections would be completed by existing RiU "teams" in each consortium. The structure of the teams to be determined by consortia based on their respective organising structures and reporting procedures. Face-to-face or virtual discussion according to consortia's own meeting schedules.	Taking stock of the RiU activities you have documented this quarter and the anticipated RiU outcomes [awareness, endorsement, demand] you had, reflect on the following: a. Which types of RiU activities did you undertake (refer to the figure Key areas of RiU activity in CARIAA)? b. What were the most positive changes or trends in this period? Where did we get evidence of these changes or trends? c. What were the stimulating factors supporting these changes? What did you do, specifically? d. What were the hindering factors? e. What actions will you take as a team based on this analysis?	Question cards to guide face to face reflections. New form to share reflections on the CARIAA KM platform.
Six-monthly Who: Completed at consortium level and including the relevant RiU and research team members the consortium judges to be appropriate. Timed to coincide with six-monthly and annual reporting processes. Consortium-level reflections followed-up with a facilitated CARIAA-wide webinar or face-to-face meeting to share and compare findings and discuss common lessons or challenges.	Reflecting on your quarterly RiU reporting (if any), and your recent consortium reporting, consider the following: a. What have been some of the main activities under each of the CARIAA RiU areas (refer to the figure Key areas of RiU activity in CARIAA)? b. Which tools, approaches or activities have proven most effective for your consortium's RiU work over the past six months? Provide one or two examples of how you've applied them with particular stakeholder groups. c. Which types of engagement outcomes have you seen emerging from your consortium's activities in the past six months? Where? Where did you get the evidence of these changes or trends? d. Which tools, approaches or activities are proving less effective than expected? Why do you think this is the case? e. What do these lessons from the last six months suggest about your consortium's theory of change (or RiU impact pathway)? Are any changes in strategy or practice needed?	Question cards to guide face to face reflections. New form to share reflections on the CARIAA KM platform.
Annual Climate change over 21st century will have significant impacts on forms of migration that compromise human security	Reflecting on your respective six-monthly RiU reporting, consider the following: a. What are the most significant lessons emerging from CARIAA's RiU work over the past year? Which specific examples of RiU activities/processes/tools best illustrate these lessons? b. What do these lessons tell us about how to strategise for the year to come? How could we work collectively to amplify our positive outcomes, and mitigate our challenges in the future? c. What do they tell us about the overall CARIAA strategy and theory of change? d. Who else should know about these learnings, and how might we communicate them?	Question cards to guide face to face reflections. New form to share reflections on the CARIAA KM platform.

Building on the Learning

Incorporating reflection results: An effective consortium learning strategy would include a plan for incorporating the results of reflection into the consortium's RiU strategy. Each level of reflection (quarterly, six-monthly and annual) should build on the level before it. This can be done, for instance, by reviewing the results of any quarterly reflection moments prior to or during the scheduled 6-month and annual meetings of RiU leads. These meetings will provide an opportunity to take stock and adjust RiU strategies as appropriate.

A CARIAA Dashboard interface will help to make this voluntary process of capturing reflections an efficient, systematic one. The interface will also make it easy to share reflections across the consortia and between the consortia and IDRC. Euforic will able to assist in facilitating the first round of collective analysis.

Looking at change over the long term: Some of the success of current RiU efforts builds on efforts by projects/programs that pre-date CARIAA. Taking this into account can help CARIAA to pave the way for its research to influence decision making in the future, beyond the lifetime of the program. CARIAA can start to understand change around RiU practices within the program on a longer timescale by linking reflection results to the CARIAA Capacity Baseline Assessment findings.

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Annex: RiU Learning Pocket Guide and Pre-Event Worksheet

Tools for RiU Learning

The CARIAA RiU Learning Pocket Guide and Pre-Event Worksheet were developed as tools to aid reflection on RiU.

This following pages contain **color versions** and **easy-print black and white versions** of both tools.

Putting Together the Pocket Guide

These instructions are for the Pocket Guide only (the Pre-Event Worksheet is separate).

Materials you will need:

- Printer
- Scissors
- Lamination machine (optional)
- Hole punch (optional)
- Binder ring (optional)

Steps:

1. Print the pages containing the version (color or black & white) you would like to use, double-sided on 6 sheets of A4 paper.

2. Cut each sheet of A4 paper in half to separate the cards. There will be 6 cards in total.

3. Laminate each card (optional).

4. Hole punch each laminated card in the same place, in the top left corner. Put all 6 cards in order onto a binder ring (optional).

NB: The "Taking Stock" card is reusable when laminated - use a dry-erase marker to fill out the table and wipe clean when finished.
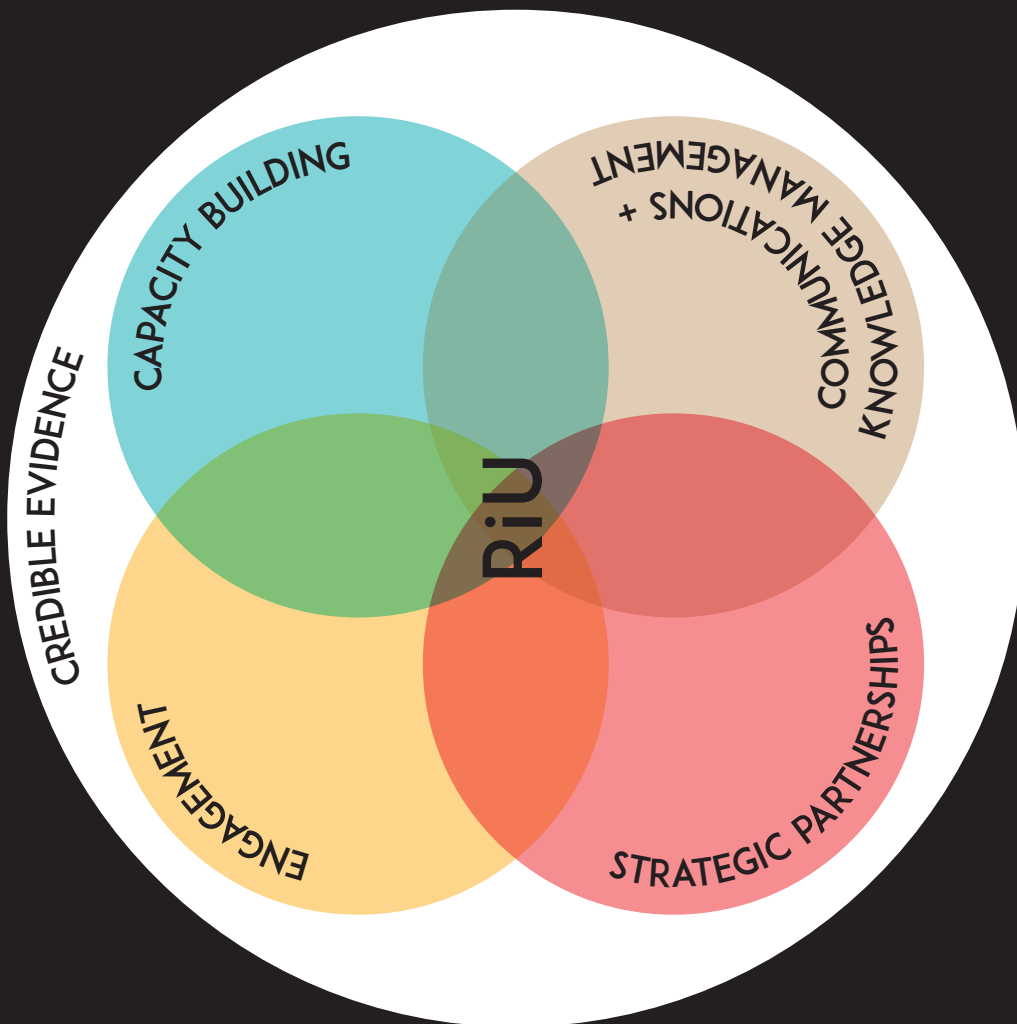
THE CARIAA

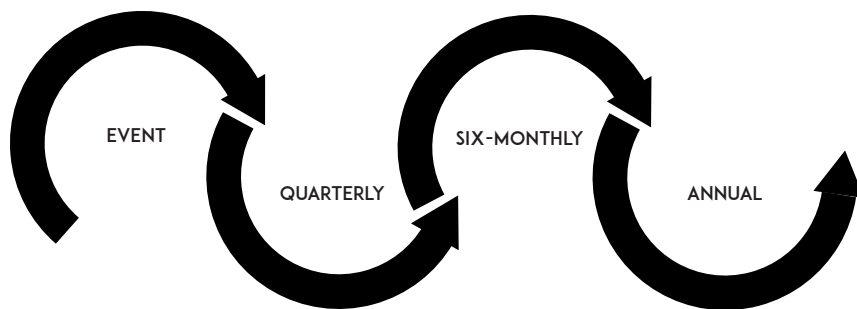# RiU LEARNING POCKET GUIDE

IN COLLABORATION WITH:

OXFAM

KEY AREAS OF RiU

CAPACITY BUILDING

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT + COMMUNICATIONS

CREDIBLE EVIDENCE

RiU

ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This pocket guide is a tool to aid reflection on research-into-use (RiU) activities in order to learn from them. The content is derived from the CARIAA RiU Learning Guide, which provides a comprehensive overview of the Collaborative Adaptation Research Initiative in Africa and Asia (CARIAA) approach to RiU.

In the CARIAA approach to RiU, regular reflection on RiU activities within and across the program's four consortia allows the program to adjust its RiU strategies based on collective learning about RiU. Cyclical reflection and action are crucial to ensuring that CARIAA research is relevant and used. This pocket guide includes "cue cards" intended to guide four kinds of reflection moments that should feed into each other: event, quarterly, six-monthly, and annual.

EVENT   QUARTERLY   SIX-MONTHLY   ANNUAL

REFLECTION MOMENTS TIMELINE

TAKING STOCK

Use this table to capture your reflections based on the questions on the Quarterly, Six-monthly, and Annual cards.

AREA	ACTIVITIES
ENGAGEMENT	
CAPACITY BUILDING	
KM + COMMS	
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS	

REFLECTING ON RiU:

EVENT

REFLECTING ON RiU:

QUARTERLY

EVENT

FORMAT

DESCRIPTION

Part of the After Action Review for individual stakeholder engagement or research uptake events.

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE

These reflections should be completed by the teams leading the event.

WHAT TO REFLECT ON

Reflect on the planning and execution of the event, including the major successes and challenges.

QUESTIONS

1 Did we engage the people we had aimed to engage? If not, why not?

2 What worked well? What worked less well?

3 What should we do differently next time?

4 What is our biggest lesson learned from this event?

QUARTERLY

FORMAT

DESCRIPTION

Face-to-face or virtual discussion according to consortia's own meeting schedules.

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE

These reflections should be completed by existing RiU "teams" in each consortium. The structure of the teams should be determined by consortia based on their respective organisational structures and reporting procedures.

WHAT TO REFLECT ON

Reflect on the RiU activities you have documented this quarter and the RiU outcomes (awareness, endorsement, demand) you had anticipated.

QUESTIONS

1 Referring to the Key Areas of RiU card, which types of RiU activities did you undertake?

2 What were the most positive changes or trends in this period? Where did we get evidence of these changes or trends?

3 What were the stimulating factors supporting these changes? What did you do, specifically?

4 What were the hindering factors?

5 What actions will you take as a team based on this analysis?

REFLECTING ON RiU:

SIX-MONTHLY

REFLECTING ON RiU:

ANNUAL

SIX-MONTHLY

FORMAT

DESCRIPTION

Consortium-level reflections followed-up with a facilitated programme-wide webinar or face-to-face meeting to share and compare findings and discuss common lessons or challenges. Timed to coincide with six-monthly and annual reporting processes.

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE

These reflections should be completed at consortium level and include relevant RiU and research team members, as appropriate.

WHAT TO REFLECT ON

Reflect on your quarterly RiU reporting and your recent consortium reporting.

QUESTIONS

1. Referring to the Key Areas of RiU card, what have been some of the main activities under each of the RiU areas?

2. Which tools, approaches or activities have proven most effective for your consortium's RiU work? Provide one or two examples of how you have applied them with particular stakeholder groups.

3. Which types of engagement outcomes have you seen emerging from your consortium's activities? Where? Where did you get the evidence of these changes or trends?

4. Which tools, approaches or activities are proving less effective than expected? Why might this be?

5. What do these lessons suggest about your consortium's theory of change or RiU impact pathway? Are any changes in strategy or practice needed?

ANNUAL

FORMAT

DESCRIPTION

Facilitated session at the Annual Learning Review. Initiated after consortia have undertaken their own six-monthly reflections and shared them together.

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE

These reflections should be programme-wide, engaging all RiU focal persons and other relevant consortium partners.

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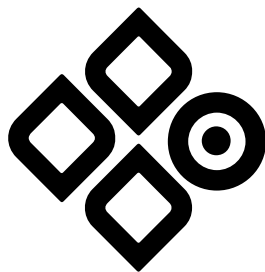
Reflect on your six-monthly RiU reporting.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the most significant lessons emerging from the programme's RiU work over the past year? Which specific examples of RiU activities/processes/tools best illustrate these lessons?

2. What do these lessons tell us about how to strategise for the year to come? How could we work collectively to amplify our positive outcomes, and mitigate our challenges in the future?

3. What do they tell us about the overall programme strategy and theory of change?

4. Who else should know about these learnings, and how might we communicate them?

CARIAA RiU LEARNING
PRE-EVENT WORKSHEET

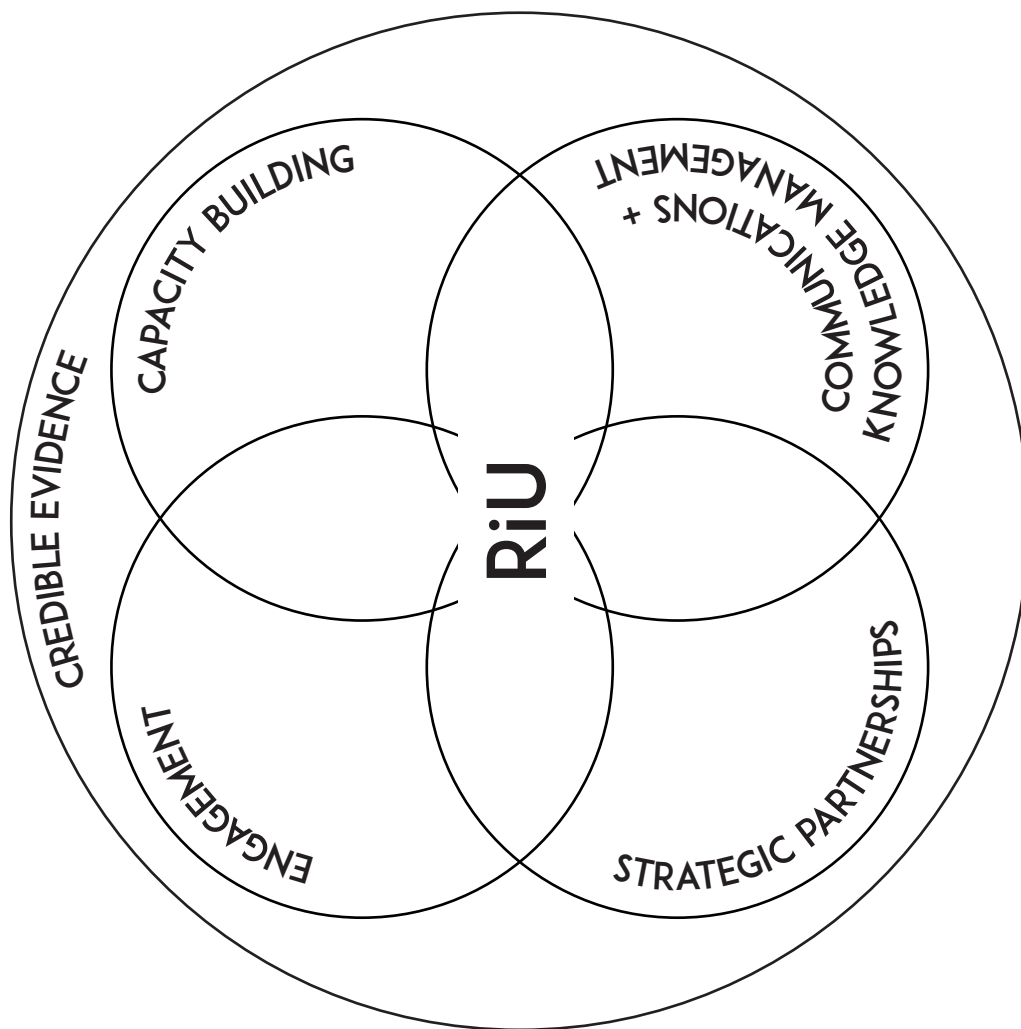| QUESTION	REFLECTIONS
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WHAT kind(s) of outcome(s) do we want this engagement to contribute to directly/indirectly? (Refer to the three levels of RiU outcomes: awareness, endorsement, and demand.)	
HOW does the design of this event/activity target these specific stakeholders and outcomes?	

THE CARIAA

RiU LEARNING
POCKET GUIDE

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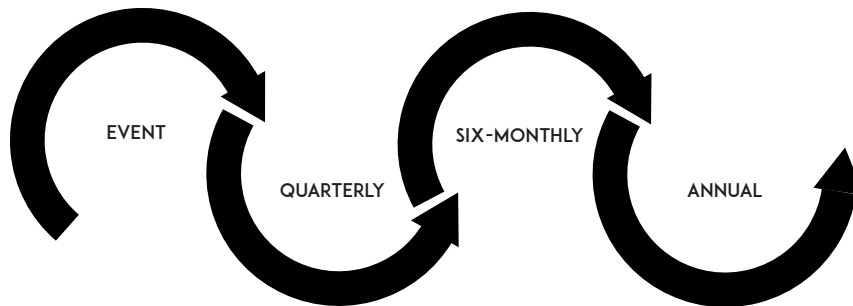
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- -

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Reflect on the planning and execution of the event, including the major successes and challenges.

QUESTIONS

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QUARTERLY

FORMAT

DESCRIPTION

Face-to-face or virtual discussion according to consortia's own meeting schedules.

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE

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QUESTIONS

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REFLECTING ON RiU:

SIX-MONTHLY

- -

REFLECTING ON RiU:

ANNUAL

SIX-MONTHLY

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2 Which tools, approaches or activities have proven most effective for your consortium's RiU work? Provide one or two examples of how you have applied them with particular stakeholder groups.

3 Which types of engagement outcomes have you seen emerging from your consortium's activities? Where? Where did you get the evidence of these changes or trends?

4 Which tools, approaches or activities are proving less effective than expected? Why might this be?

5 What do these lessons suggest about your consortium's theory of change or RiU impact pathway? Are any changes in strategy or practice needed?

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Reflect on your six-monthly RiU reporting.

QUESTIONS

1 What are the most significant lessons emerging from the programme's RiU work over the past year? Which specific examples of RiU activities/ processes/tools best illustrate these lessons?

2 What do these lessons tell us about how to strategise for the year to come? How could we work collectively to amplify our positive outcomes, and mitigate our challenges in the future?

3 What do they tell us about the overall programme strategy and theory of change?

4 Who else should know about these learnings, and how might we communicate them?

CARIAA RiU LEARNING
PRE-EVENT WORKSHEET

QUESTION	REFLECTIONS
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WHAT kind(s) of outcome(s) do we want this engagement to contribute to directly/ indirectly? (Refer to the three levels of RiU outcomes: awareness, endorsement, and demand.)	
HOW does the design of this event/activity target these specific stakeholders and outcomes?	