WORKSHEET: IDENTIFYING AUDIENCES

Worksheet: Identifying Audiences

The following worksheet is authored by the University of Waterloo's Water Institute. It accompanies the following *WaterLeadership* training sessions:

› What's your science message

› Write a briefing note

› Plain language skills for researchers

› Develop a lightning talk and elevator pitch

The purpose of the worksheet is to help strengthen your research impact and communication skills by applying what you learn during the training sessions. You are encouraged to review the accompanying training materials alongside filling out this worksheet.

This worksheet focuses on helping you identify a specific target audience for your research outcomes. It is a resource to use when choosing an outlet and creating content to communicate your research through various means such as briefing notes, news stories, blogs, research impact posters, lightning talks, etc.

STEP 1 – BRAINSTORM POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS AND BENEFICIARIES:

Stakeholders are individuals or groups who may have an interest in your work. There will be different ways to communicate your research to each stakeholder group in order to ensure your message resonates. Who are you trying to reach and engage?

☐ The public

☐ Government

☐ Media

☐ Communities

☐ Other scientists and researchers

☐ Industry

☐ Service providers

☐ Other: _____

How to get specific

While it is a good starting point to identify general categories of audience targets such as "the public" or "policymakers," the more specific you can be the better. Identifying a specific target audience will help ensure that your message resonates. Targeting the right

audience makes it more likely they will respond to your call to action or recommendations. Below are some examples of how to identify specific audiences. Check all the boxes for the audiences you are trying to reach. There are many more so please use the "Other" category to list additional audiences.

Get more specific than "The Public" – Examples:

☐ Nature centres

☐ Rotary clubs

☐ Senior centres, retirement communities

☐ Science centres, museums

☐ Religious institutions and groups

☐ Business groups

☐ Chambers of commerce

☐ Libraries

☐ Outdoor or wilderness clubs

☐ Service or volunteer groups

☐ Parent-teacher groups

☐ Policy or voting-specific groups

☐ Other: _____

Get more specific than "Policymakers" – Examples:

☐ Water or wastewater service providers

☐ Conservation authority watershed planners

☐ Federal government watershed modellers

☐ Provincial government water policy co-ordinators

☐ Municipal waterfront project planners

☐ Minister's director of policy

☐ Other: _____

TIPS: FIND SPECIFIC NAMES AND TITLES USING STAFF DIRECTORIES

Government of Canada staff directory –
https: geds-sage.gc.ca

Government of Ontario staff directory –
www.info.gov.on.ca

Get more specific for other categories:

› Media – Name the media outlets that you are targeting. Otherwise you can narrow it down by listing the characteristics/category of the outlets you are aiming for such as its political leaning, newspapers, industry magazines, radio, television, academic orientation, etc.

› Communities – Name the specific communities that you are targeting. Otherwise, identify the characteristics of the communities you are targeting such as geography, interest, ethnicity, etc.

› Other scientists and researchers – List names of the researchers that you are targeting. Otherwise, try to identify other important factors such as area of expertise, location, level of influence, etc.

› Industry – List the names of the companies that you are targeting. Otherwise, identify the type of industry and narrow it down with location.

› Service providers – List the names of service providers that you are targeting. Otherwise, identify the categories of service such as drinking water providers, wastewater treatment, watermain maintenance, etc.

STEP 2 – LEARN ABOUT YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Before you create a communication piece or initiate contact with your audience, it is a good idea to do some background work. Some questions might include:

What are the priorities and/or research needs of your target audience(s)?

What types of challenges or problems is your target audience trying to address?

Are there challenges associated with communicating with this audience(s)?

What are some strategies for overcoming these communication challenges?

Once you have a sense of who your target audience is, what their interests/needs are, and what the potential barriers to talking to them are, get clear on why you want to connect with them. Do you think they can implement your research findings? How can they benefit from your research?

Stakeholder	Why do you want to communicate with them? What are you hoping they will do once they have heard your message (your "call to action")?

STEP 4 – CHOOSE YOUR COMMUNICATION METHOD

There are many different ways to deliver your research message. The method you choose should be based on who you have identified as your intended audience and your communication objective.

The Water Institute has developed a number of training sessions to help guide you in the development of some of these materials, including:

› Briefing notes

› Lightning talks and elevator pitches

› Infographics and research impact posters

If you are unsure which communication method suits your objective, please refer to the Knowledge Mobilization Toolkit training session.

Please refer to the *WaterLeadership* website to access the training materials.

TIP: CHOOSE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES THAT MEET YOUR OBJECTIVES

See examples of how to link your engagement strategy to an objective: **Appendix A of the Knowledge Mobilization Toolkit**, produced by the Global Water Futures Knowledge Mobilization team.