



Growing KTT in Ontario

Tools and Training to Improve KTT

OMAFRA-UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH AGREEMENT CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL REPORT, 2019-20

CASE STUDY SUBMITTED PER REPORTING REQUIREMENT 3.4.6

AT A GLANCE

Goal

The goal of this project was to develop tools and training to enhance Knowledge Translation and Transfer (KTT) competencies, skills and capacity among University of Guelph (U of G) researchers to continue to help bridge the gap between research and impact in Ontario's agri-food and rural development sectors.

Strategy

In Summer 2019, three KTT resources were developed and deployed: (1) research funding program KTT example plans, (2) KTT plan evaluation tips, (3) KTT plan checklist. In addition, from October 2019 to April 2020, the Office of Research, Agri-Food Partnership partnered with the Research Innovation Office (RIO), and the Community Engaged Scholarship Institute (CESI) to deliver the Skills for Research Impact workshop series. This series was offered monthly to faculty, research staff and graduate students to enhance their skills related to designing and delivering KTT plans, and ultimately enhance the impact of their research.

Benefits to Agri-food Sector

Researchers, graduate students and U of G staff play a central role in connecting the wider agri-food community with their research. The KTT resources and skills series were designed to provide advice, training, and opportunities for skills development in competencies that support effective KTT, such as stakeholder engagement, clear language writing, knowledge mobilization planning, and KTT evaluation. Building these competencies will advance the synthesis, exchange, application and dissemination of knowledge resulting from Agreement-funded research and will ultimately drive knowledge into action for the benefit of Ontario's agri-food sector.

ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY BUILDING

KTT Resources

In Summer 2019, three new KTT resources were created by the Office of Research, Agri-Food Partnership KTT Unit in partnership with the Research Innovation Branch at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). These products were produced with the goal of improving the quality of KTT plans submitted as part of the research proposals for the Alliance Tier 1 Research and KTT Funding Programs. The following three resources were developed:

1. [Example KTT Plans](#):

A series of six complete KTT plans were created to exemplify what constitutes a well-developed KTT plan. These example plans are designed to be relevant to all researchers applying for Alliance funding.

2. [KTT Plan Checklist](#):

This resource outlines what should be considered and included in a KTT plan. The content of this checklist is based on the Alliance KTT plan template in NG-RMS and is based on the best practices outlined in the Alliance's manual of best practices called Growing Knowledge Translation and Transfer (KTT) in Ontario.

3. [KTT Plan Evaluation Tips](#):

This resource provides researchers with practical tips for evaluating individual KTT activities which can serve as a guide for reporting annually on KTT activities.

These tools were launched to support the development of quality KTT plans during the 2019-20 Tier 1 Research Funding program call launch. They are also embedded in applications on the Next Generation Research Management System and are available on the Alliance website.

The Numbers

- Number of applications
 - 127 Tier 1 research stream applications
 - 11 KTT-Mobilization stream applications
 - 3 KTT-Research stream applications
- Number of tool downloads:
 - 179 individuals downloaded the KTT Manual
 - 61 individuals downloaded the KTT Example Plans
 - 59 individuals downloaded the KTT Checklist
 - 44 individuals downloaded the KTT Evaluation Tips

Skills for Research Impact Series

In addition to the digital resources, The Office of Research, Agri-Food Partnership collaborated with the Research Innovation Office (RIO), and the Community Engaged Scholarship Institute (CESI) to create Skills for Research Impact, a monthly workshop series throughout the 2019-20 school year. Financial support for this series was leveraged from the [Future Skills Centre](#) through [Research Impact Canada](#).

This monthly workshop series is offered to University of Guelph faculty, research staff and graduate students interested in enhancing the impact of their research. In 2019-2020, the following eight sessions were offered:

- Planning for Research Impact
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Clear Language Writing
- Design Principles: Designing for your Audience
- Website Design & Digital Accessibility
- Social Media Engagement
- Event Planning and Facilitation
- Evaluating KTT Activities

The workshops were highly participatory and provided practical knowledge, skills and tools that could be applied to participants' own research contexts and goals. The workshops covered information on how to successfully plan, execute, and evaluate knowledge mobilization activities as well as covered topics key to effective research communications and engagement of non-academic audiences, including policy, industry, and community stakeholders.

The Numbers

- 8 sessions were delivered over the 2019-2020 school year.
- 16 participants attended each session on average.
- 75 individuals attended one or more sessions. Most participants were U of G students and staff, with some faculty attending.
- 100 per cent of participants rated confidence in their ability to develop a knowledge mobilization plan as good or very good after attending the "Planning for Research Impact" workshop.

BEHIND THE NUMBERS: INFORMING DECISION MAKING

The Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance is utilizing and evaluating KTT methods and best practices to support awareness and impact of research among end users. One of the ways that the Alliance does this is through the creation and evaluation of tools to support researchers in developing KTT Plans for the research proposals.



“The KTT Tools were created to support researchers in the development of strong KTT plans for their research. Implementing best practices in KTT early on at the research proposal level is important to ensure there is a framework in place for knowledge transfer throughout and at the end of the research process. The tools help researchers to build strong plans and make critical decisions about who needs to know about their research and how to transfer the knowledge that the research produces to them.”

Dr. Alison Duncan is a professor and researcher in the Department of Human Health and Nutritional Sciences. Dr. Duncan is a research program director who was the lead in past years for the Food for Health initiative and more recently for the Alliance KTT program.



“The example plans were very helpful during the development of the KTT section for our Tier 1 research proposals. The KTT Tools helped guide our decision-making about what to include in the proposal to ensure that we develop impactful KTT plans. This will ultimately help our research get into the hands of people who need it.”

Eugene Enriquez is the Outreach and Project Coordinator for the Bioproducts Discovery & Development Centre at the University of Guelph. He supports the research portfolios of Dr. Amar K. Mohanty and Dr. Manjusri Misra.

BEHIND THE NUMBERS: AGRI-FOOD SECTOR BENEFITS

The Skills for Research Impact series is building skills that support effective KTT, including enhanced written and verbal communication, project planning and project management, effective KTT plans and the science of KTT. This series is building capacity in graduate students in the agri-food and rural planning and development sectors.



“This research series is the best thing that I have enjoyed on campus. It was very valuable professional development. Each module, although independent with its full integrity of the topic at hand also represented a piece of the larger puzzle. Topics like KTT, email writing, social media and much more were valuable as they are not covered in any of my classes. They were very formative and fundamental for the academic and the researcher. This shows the forward thinking of the department and innovative minds to serve an academic community and meet unspoken needs. The series was informative and inclusive and was definitely a great investment. I am very grateful for the knowledge that was shared.”

Ourlaine Pashley is a master's student in rural Planning and Development in Dr. Ryan Gibson's lab. Ourlaine is examining the perceptions of rural Ontario residents regarding future rural policy priorities.