

Beneficiary Change story guide

Have you talked with the users of your technology solution about the benefits or changes (both intended and unintended) resulting from your technology being on the market?

What is this tool?

This tool will guide you through the development of a beneficiary change story. This will help you to communicate the impact and value that your commercialised technology can create for different industries, the environment, society and the economy.



Note

Storytelling is a simple but powerful process. It allows people to explain what has been significant for them without needing a specific monitoring indicator, as the story captures unexpected and unknown changes¹.

¹ The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique A Guide to Its Use by Rick Davies and Jess Dart - <https://mande.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/MSCGuide.pdf>

Why use this tool?

Capturing stories from end users or beneficiaries in an open and impartial way can help you understand the outcomes of your commercialised technology.

Stories can provide important evidence for impact evaluations and help you to communicate how your commercialised technologies have made a change.

This tool can help you do this by:

- **Capturing insights and reflections from beneficiaries about the impact or change** your technology has had on their business and/or lives in an open and impartial way. This can help you to share your success with potential future customers (and in some cases future investors); and
- **Understanding how your commercialised technology is valued by users**, including changes in outcomes, processes, the distribution of costs and benefits and any intended and unintended outcomes and impacts (both positive and negative).

How to use this tool

The following steps will help you identify the beneficiaries of your commercialised technology, understand how they benefited and showcase the value of partnering with you.



Tip

This tool does not aim to describe the benefits for the customer who buys your technology.

If you want to write a case study about your customer where you show the benefit of your technology go to the [Customer Case Study Guide tool](#).



Step 1. Identify different users and beneficiaries by their roles

To help identify the beneficiaries of your commercialised technology, you can refer to your:

- [Market Discovery Guide tool: Part B – Mapping the Value Chain](#) (Step 2) and/or [Guide to Impact Planning and Monitoring: Part A – Impact pathway](#) (Step 4)
- customers and clients to see if they would be comfortable with you talking to any of their customers (i.e. the end users).



Tip

Beneficiaries vary depending on the value chain your technology is benefiting.

Refer to the examples to understand more.

Who is a beneficiary?

A beneficiary can be anyone who receives benefit or value from your technology solution. For this tool we have defined a beneficiary as:

- someone who provides inputs into the technology product if they have increased their incomes or had other social or environmental benefits
- an end user of the technology solution. **For this tool, a beneficiary is not the customer.**

Examples

Food processing technology

Understanding the benefits and impacts of a technology that processes fruit into products such as jam or wine could involve talking to farmers who produce the fruit and now have a potential new market to supply. It could also include end users/ consumers of the final products the technology creates (i.e. jam or wine).

Water quality monitoring system

To understand the benefits of a water quality monitoring system, you could talk to users of the water. You could also talk to industry associations whose members are benefiting from having access to water quality data, or government officials who use the data or see benefits.



Step 2. Collect the stories

This is usually done through individual interviews or focus group discussions.

You could also set up a system to capture stories of benefits shared with your research team to make the process easier.



Tip

Use open-ended questions. Encourage people to talk about the benefits and changes they have experienced personally and observed more broadly in the community, in the environment and/or across the industry.

Example questions:

- Do you buy or use xxx product?
- Can you describe what it was like before you started buying or using the product?
- Can you describe the biggest change you have experienced since buying or using the product?
- Would you describe this change as significant? If so, why is it significant for you/your organisation/your business?



Step 3. Decode the key changes

Once you have finished collecting different stories, the next step is to determine the most common themes of change that your beneficiaries reported.



Tip

If you identify unexpected negative changes/impacts, think about how your team can use this information to refine your product and/or discuss it with your customers and clients.



Step 4. Write a story that describes the changes

For each theme, consider writing a beneficiary story. These stories should capture collective changes experienced or observed by beneficiaries.

For help, refer to the [Tips for writing a beneficiary story](#).



Tip

Ask someone external to your team to read and provide feedback (such as a technology transfer officer or company you are working with). Refine the stories so that the key benefits/impacts are clearly identified.



Step 5. Share the story to communicate the impact

These stories can be used for multiple purposes, and can be sent out through different communication channels.

You could use your organisation's website or social media channels. You could also print hardcopy materials for the Technology Transfer Office to promote your technology/capability, or when you are speaking to investors and customers.

Tips for writing a beneficiary story

Consider the following tips when writing your beneficiary stories:

Tip 1.

Use a couple of sentences to start your story

Start the story with one or two sentences that explain the key benefits and describes the beneficiary.

Tip 2.

Describe the situation before the change

To help the reader understand the problem, make sure you explain briefly what the situation was like before the commercialised technology was used.

Tip 3.

Describe the change

Describe how the lives and/or businesses of the beneficiaries have changed or been improved as a result of the commercialised technology.

Photos and quotes can help with this, but remember to get permission to use a photo or quote from someone.

Tip 4.

Don't forget the bigger picture

If possible, describe the broader implications for society, the environment and/or the economy as a result of this change.

Tip 5.

Keep it simple, and use plain language

These stories are not technical reports, so avoid technical language where possible. The aim is to capture and share the changes your beneficiaries have described, experienced and observed.

Remember: the story is not about the technical features of your solution.