

Tool 4: Suggested Communication Deliverables for Coproduced Projects

An informational tool provided as part of a toolkit for researchers and resource managers with an interest in coproducing actionable science to support public land management.

Researchers and resource managers commit to working together as a team to create actionable science products as part of coproduction. Regular communication within the team about project progress, interim results, and potential applications of project findings is key to successful coproduction. This communication need extends beyond the project team to include agency leaders, colleagues, collaborators, and other interested parties.

In this tool, we suggest a suite of communication-focused deliverables for coproduced projects that can foster shared understanding and awareness within and beyond the project team. These deliverables can also assist agency staff with sharing and promoting the use of project products in public lands decision making. Typically, the research lead or work team drafts and maintains these documents in an accessible location for the entire project team to view, provide input on, and download for sharing.

In addition to planned science products, we suggest that project leads and teams consider the following communication-focused deliverables for their projects:

Project Logistics Tracker (see "Project Logistics Tracker Template")

When to create/update: Project initiation; update at least annually.

Purpose and audience: Helps ensure project team members (especially any new members) are aware of and understand key project foundations, decisions, activities, and constraints. This is an internal document.

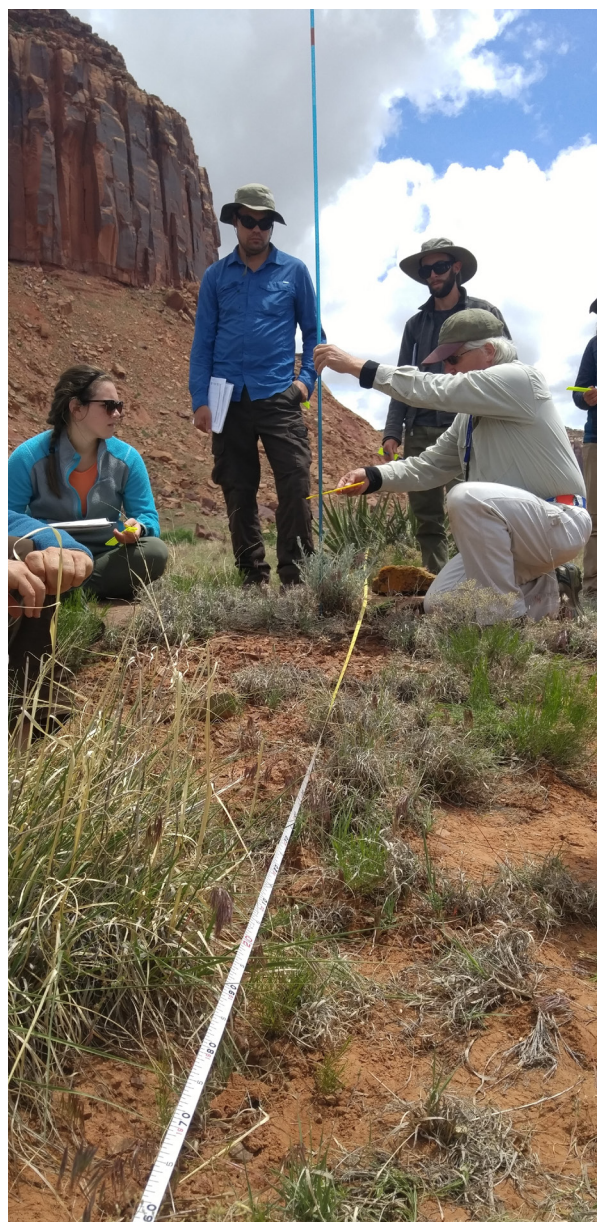
Format and content: Up to several pages of compiled information on interagency agreements (IAAs); project funding, timelines, and authorizations; planned level of coproduction; names and roles of project personnel and other interested parties; and project goals, activities, and deliverables.

Project Briefing Sheets (see "Guidance for Writing Project Briefing Sheets")

When to create/update: Project initiation; update at least annually.

Purpose and audience: Shares a current summary of the project in a short, easy to read format. This sheet is a primary mechanism for communicating core project information to interested parties outside of the project team.

Format and content: Typically one page that contains information on the basic components of the project and reflects project progress over time. Sections typically include title, background and management need, goal and objectives, methods, anticipated benefits, and contact information. Once the project is completed, the briefing sheet is typically expanded to two pages to include key findings and product citations.





Project Presentation (and accompanying slide deck)

When to create/update: Project initiation; update at least annually.

Purpose and audience: Explains project components in a format conducive to interactive sharing and discussion between researchers and resource managers.

Format and content: The initial slide deck expands as the project progresses. It explains the project background and need, purpose and goal, methods, progress and results, anticipated uses and benefits for public land management, and how to access project deliverables and contact project leads.

Plain Language Project Summary (often shared as a webpage)

When to create/update: Project initiation; update as needed.

Purpose and audience: Communicates to the public about the project need, goals, and anticipated benefits.

Format and content: A short (typically fewer than 500 words), [plain language summary](#) of the project. The summary typically includes information similar to the project briefing sheet (e.g., why the project is needed, an overview of methods, anticipated uses and benefits for public land management), but is shorter and geared toward a lay audience. Once the project is completed, the summary may be modified to include key findings and product links.

Suggested Citation

Selby, L.B., Carter, S.K., Haby, T.S., Wood, D.J.A., Bamzai-Dodson, A., Anderson, P.J., Herrick, J.E., Samuel, E.M., and Tull, J.C. Suggested Communication Deliverables for Coproduced Projects: An informational tool provided as part of a toolkit for researchers and resource managers with an interest in coproducing actionable science to support public land management. Denver (CO): U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management; 2024. <https://www.blm.gov/noc/report/toolkit-coproducing-actionable-science-support-public-land-management>.

Project Logistics Tracker Template

An internal document that clarifies important information about a project and how it will be coproduced. Intended for key staff, including funders and project leads.

We suggest that the project leads from the resource management agency and science agency/organization begin to fill out this information together soon after a project receives funding. Reviewing and discussing this information together with the entire project team and other core project staff will help to clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations for the entire partnership in a proactive, transparent way. Some information and sections may be unknown or not applicable to the project; leave those sections blank. We suggest that the project team store this document in a location that is easily accessible to all and revisit the information periodically to keep it up to date.

Title	
Working project title	
Date last updated (and by whom)	
Interagency Agreement (IAA)	
Title on IAA and/or statement of work for the project	
IAA number	
IAA start and end dates	
Notes (e.g., funding authority, whether the IAA is severable or nonseverable, any modifications to the IAA and the date they were signed)	
Funding	
Management agency, program, and position/person who provided the funding	
Science provider, program, and position/person who authorized IAA and/or receipt of funds	
Original funding amount and date awarded	
Any additional funding amounts and sources for the project and date(s) awarded	
Science provider's in-kind contributions or leveraged funds	

Overall project cost

(e.g., project funding + in kind support + other contributions)

Science provider’s account number(s) and name(s)

Current net available balance in account (include date of balance)

Start and end date(s) for account(s)

Notes

(e.g., funding code(s), no-year funds)

Coproduction

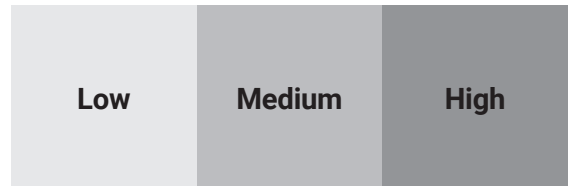
Level of coproduction

Circle the intended coproduction level (low, medium, high).

Please see [“Tool 2: What Level of Coproduction Makes Sense for My Project?”](#) for more information on different levels of coproduction that may be best suited for different types of projects, and what those levels of coproduction involve.

Levels of coproduction:

Coproduction level



Management agency offices/parties involved in coproduction

(include topic/component of project, if applicable)

Position/person from the management agency who authorized the project to be conducted using a coproduction approach

Data Sharing and Project Approvals

Notes

Include any data sharing agreements, permits needed, animal care approvals, etc.

People

Resource management lead

(This is the day-to-day decision-maker for regular project work who is also responsible for communicating with the research lead and with the management agency Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR).)

Management agency COR

(This is the formal decision-maker for the funding and for any major project redirection, who is also responsible for communicating with the funder, resource management lead, and research lead.)

Research lead

(This person is responsible for communicating with the resource management lead and COR and with the position/person who authorized and oversees funding to the researcher.)

Project team members

(Includes those responsible for attending project meetings, participating in project discussions, and being current on project activities; members advise project leads on project decisions.)

Core work team

(Includes staff who conduct day-to-day work on the project, including collecting and analyzing data.)

Additional technical experts

(Includes people outside of the project and core work teams (e.g., other field biologists) who provide expertise on a specific topic.)

Others who would like to receive information about the project

(Includes people who might be invited to project briefings and encouraged to share ideas or concerns with the project leads or COR. Identify who on the project team will keep them informed about the project, how, and how often. Typically, team members take responsibility for communicating with others in their agency with an interest in the project.)

Project Goals, Activities, and Deliverables

Overarching goal from the IAA (or modification), if applicable

Project goal and management need

(This is usually drawn from the project statement of work.)

Anticipated project deliverables

(e.g., manuscripts, datasets, tools)

Target users of project products**Project communication materials**

List and include links to project website, project briefing sheets, and other communication materials. Store copies of all materials in a location accessible to all project team members. This is a running list to be updated over time.

Project communication plan and responsible parties

Briefly describe who will share project updates and deliverables with interested parties and when and how that sharing will happen.

Project briefings

List the date, target audience, and presenter for each briefing, along with the presentation title and link. This is a running list to be updated over time.

Project deliverables

List citations and links to conference abstracts and presentations, journal publications, and other project deliverables. Note that this transitions from a list of planned deliverables to a list of completed deliverables over time, and may evolve based on project direction, progress, and decisions.

Notes

Guidance for Writing Project Briefing Sheets

Purpose and Potential Uses

Project briefing sheets are a go-to resource for sharing information about the project with:

- **Partners** who may be funding, permitting, or coproducing the project.
- **Stakeholders**, including policy makers, program leads, or other big-picture stakeholders (e.g., the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) National Science Committee) who may have an interest in the project.
- **Peers** within and beyond your program, center, or agency that may be interested in the project, including how it may relate to or provide additional context for their own work (e.g., field staff managing sagebrush ecosystems).

The intent is that language in these briefing sheets can also be helpful for other uses, including entries in agency administrative and reporting databases. For example, language in this sheet should support required entries in the U.S. Geological Survey's Budget and Science Information System (BASIS) along with other uses such as:

1. Project, task, and annual narratives in BASIS (e.g., statement of problem, objectives, methods, progress, accomplishments, relevance and impact, strategy and approach)
2. External communications (e.g., website news items, new project announcements, project webpages)
3. Conference abstracts
4. Conference presentations/posters
5. Annual reporting on project progress

Writing Suggestions

- Aim for one page of succinct information with one to two visually appealing elements (e.g., photographs) for introductory briefing sheets. Two pages is appropriate for final briefing sheets that may include results (once published). Feel free to adjust the suggested headings and content to best fit your project as it progresses.
- Keep the audience in mind. The purpose of these sheets is to provide a go-to resource to share with partners, policy makers, leadership, and other stakeholders who are interested in planned and ongoing research but may not have a background in the topic (e.g., the BLM's Core Science Team).
- Use straightforward language: "We will analyze vegetation productivity maps at the scale of local watersheds."
 - Avoid jargon: "Landsat NDVI rasters will be analyzed by 8-digit HUC codes."
- Use active voice (subjects first): "We will analyze vegetation productivity maps at the scale of local watersheds."
 - Avoid passive voice: "Landsat NDVI rasters will be analyzed by 8-digit HUC codes."
- Prioritize writing space to describe the project need and potential application of results to specific management decisions. Methods sections can be shorter (though not absent).
- Specify who is involved and their role in the project. If relevant, identify which resource management agencies or offices are involved in each part of the project and how the results are relevant to them.
- Overall, keep each section clear, straightforward, positive, and focused on how the science can be applied to management decisions. The intended audience for these briefing sheets will likely have little background on any individual project and relatively little time to read about that work, but reaching them with a clear message about your project's value for decision making can have a big impact.
- Share the briefing sheet in a format that will maintain content and layout. See Project Briefing Sheet Template.

Project Briefing Sheet Template

[Project Title]

[Introductory, Mid-Project, or Final] Briefing Sheet Background and Need

[Two to four sentences that explain key species, landscapes, or policies and define the problem – typically a management need or information gap – that this project is intended to address. It can be helpful to cite (and/or provide a link to) a specific law, policy, decision process, or guidance document that the project is addressing. One example is [“Advancing Science in the BLM,”](#) which affirmed the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM’s) commitment to use science-informed decision making at every level and in every program.]

Project Goal and Objectives

[One to two sentences that state the project goal and main objectives.]

Methods

[Very brief, plain language summary of methods for conducting this work, corresponding to the project objectives. It may be helpful to use bulleted or numbered lists and mention how the project partners will share responsibilities and decision making.]

Planned Activities or Progress to Date

[Outline planned project activities in the initial briefing sheet; describe annual progress and planned next steps in subsequent briefing sheets. If there is any concern about sharing any of this information, be sure to include the appropriate disclaimer (see example disclaimers in red text at the end of this template).]

Anticipated Uses and Benefits

[Describe the anticipated applications and uses of project products, focusing on how they can benefit public land managers and inform actions and decisions that affect public lands and waters.]

Science-Management Partnership

[This section can simply state that the project is being coproduced, or can be tailored to describe that coproduction in more detail. Example text:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) [office] requested this project to meet their need for [...]. Staff from BLM [offices] and [science provider] are working together as partners to coproduce this project, with a goal of producing practical, actionable science that informs planning, policy, and management decisions on public lands managed by the BLM (see [“Tool 1: Coproduction in the Public Lands Context”](#) for more information on coproduction).]

For More Information

Please see our project website [link] or contact [name, project position, email, phone number] or [name, project position, email, phone number] with any questions or suggestions.

[If there is any concern about information that is being shared in the project briefing sheet, we suggest that you include the appropriate disclaimer for your agency or organization. Example disclaimers:

This information is preliminary or provisional and is subject to revision. It is being provided to meet the need for timely best science and does not represent any official finding or policy of either agency.

This information has not received final approval by the [federal public land management agency] or [science provider] and is provided on the condition that neither the [federal public land management agency] nor the [science provider] nor the U.S. Government shall be held liable for any damages resulting from the authorized or unauthorized use of the information.]

Date

[We suggest including the date the briefing sheet was last revised at the bottom of the document.]



Figure: Example image of planned activities. Sarah Beckwith, BLM