Getting started with Embedded Research Translation Guide

This guide provides a checklist to get started with an Embedded Research Translation (ERT) project. ERT is an iterative co-design process among academics, practitioners and other stakeholders in which research is intentionally applied to a development challenge. Underpinning the ERT model are four pillars -partnership, process, product, and dissemination (Figure 1)- that are interwoven across all phases of a project (Figure 2). Additional information on ERT is available on the *LASER PULSE website*, through the *Introduction to Embedded Research Translation course* and the *LASER PULSE resources page*.
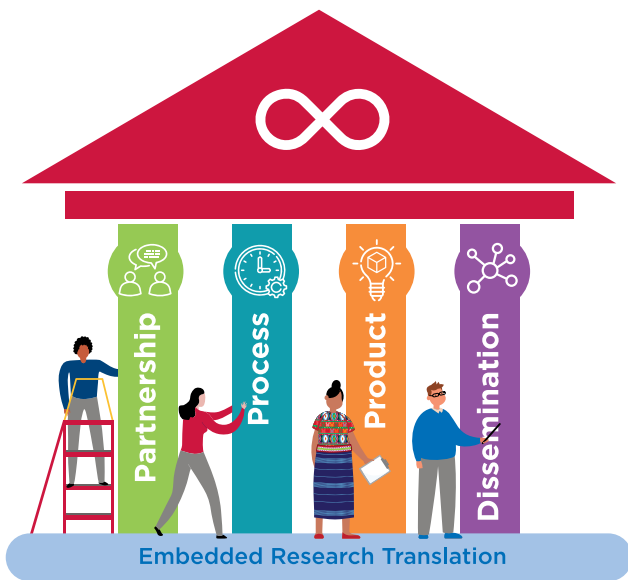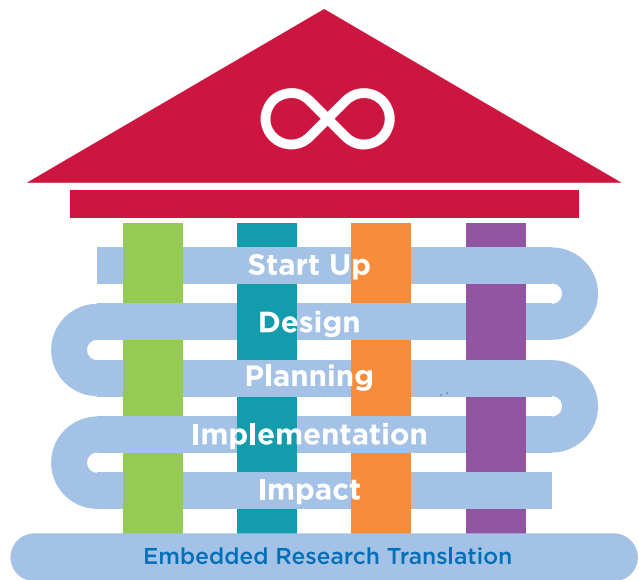
Figure 1. Four pillars of ERT

Figure 2. Project phases interwoven with the ERT pillars

As ERT is an iterative approach, it can be challenging to determine how to get started. This guide pulls together the essential elements of ERT under the umbrella of ERT principles and promising practices. The guide breaks down the application of ERT by project phase and includes a detailed checklist of promising practices and tools to be applied to each of the ERT pillars. The final page offers a condensed one-page checklist for getting started with ERT.

How to use this guide

What is the purpose of this guide?

LASER (Long-term Assistance and SErvices for Research) PULSE (Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine) developed the ERT model to provide a conceptual framework for collaborative research for development. This guide provides practical guidance for implementing ERT in the form of promising practices, applied to each of the four pillars across the project phases.

Who can use this guide?

Anyone working in a collaborative research translation project following the ERT model can use this guide - including academic researchers, practitioners, policymakers, or donors.

When is this guide used?

We recommend using the guide initially when starting a research translation project and continuing to monitor the application of the promising practices throughout all phases of the project.

How was this guide developed?

The guide was adapted from the _**Promising Practices for ERT Toolkit**_ from LASER PULSE's analysis of peer-reviewed articles and practitioner literature, and feedback from LASER PULSE's translation projects to highlight the practices and resources with the greatest potential to lead to positive outcomes in research translation.

Can select pieces of the guide be applied?

We recommend applying all principles and promising practices to maximize the impact of ERT, and also recognize that it may be necessary to tailor the promising practices to your specific context.

What do the colors mean?

Each pillar has a color- green for partnership, teal for process, orange for product, and purple for dissemination. While each pillar can stand alone, it is the combination of the pillars that reinforces the ERT model and increases the impact of the research translation project (Figure 3).
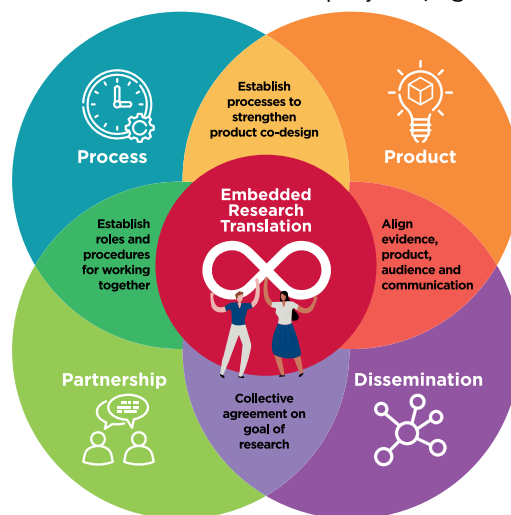

Figure 3. Interrelated pillars of Embedded Research Translation

Embedded Research Translation Principles

The ERT Principles include two cross-cutting principles and two specific principles per pillar of the ERT model. These principles offer guidance to apply during the implementation of ERT and help bring the theoretical foundation of the pillars into practical guideposts for action.

Embedded Research Translation Principles

- Embed research translation across all phases of the research project from startup and design through implementation and impact.
- Co-produce research to addresses a development challenge.

Partnership principles	Process principles	Product principles	Dissemination principles
■ Engage in equitable partnership between practitioners and researchers. ■ Proactively engage relevant stakeholders to increase research uptake and impact.	■ Establish partnership structure, roles, and procedures. ■ Agree upon expectations and project goals amongst partners.	■ Ensure evidence is accessible, valued, and understood by practitioners. ■ Co-design translation products for specific audience or end-users.	■ Plan for dissemination and impact from the beginning. ■ Embrace an iterative approach to research design, implementation, and dissemination.

1	2	3	4	5
Start Up	Design	Planning	Implementation	Impact

1. Start Up

Embedding research translation across all phases of the project begins on day one with establishing the team. Involve diverse partners and stakeholders during start up. Focus on creating an equitable partnership between practitioners and researchers while proactively engaging relevant end users to increase uptake and impact. During the start up phase, research teams should discuss the questions in the checklist below to follow the promising practices for each ERT pillar.

✓ Checklist of promising practices

Partnership	Process	Product	Dissemination
Emphasize relationship building. Are team members appropriately involved in an ongoing, open, and transparent decision-making process?	**Agree on roles and responsibilities.** Are roles, responsibilities, and the level of engagement of each person on the team documented?	**Engage end users early and often.** Are team members planning how to engage end users to identify needs and provide feedback on the ERT product(s)?	**Conduct stakeholder analysis.** Has the team conducted a stakeholder analysis to identify and plan how to engage with stakeholders?
☐	☐	☐	☐

Click on the checkboxes

Tool:
☐ *Conduct ERT Stakeholder Analysis*

1	2	3	4	5
Start Up	Design	Planning	Implementation	Impact

2. Design

Co-designing research and working with partners includes participatory discussion and shared decision-making during the project design phase. During the design phase, research teams should discuss the questions in the checklist below to follow the promising practices for each ERT pillar.

✓ Checklist of promising practices

Partnership	Process	Product	Dissemination
Define the goal of research together.	**Establish shared vocabulary and communication style.**	**Agree upon, purpose, evidence, and product.**	**Co-design dissemination plan.**
Have all partners documented and agreed upon why the partnership was created, the goal, and the research question(s)?	Are there processes in place to learn each team member's work environment, language, and communication expectations?	Have all partners documented and agreed upon the purpose for the research, how to collect evidence, and how that evidence will inform product design?	Has the team co-designed a dissemination plan before beginning research?
☐	☐	☐	☐

Click on the checkboxes

Tool:

☐ *Conduct steps 1 & 2 of Guiding Questions Workbook*

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Start Up	Design	Planning	Implementation	Impact

3. Planning

Invest time and resources in managing the partnership as well as collectively planning the purpose, style, audience, and content of research translation products. During the planning phase, research teams should discuss the questions in the checklist below to follow the promising practices for each ERT pillar.

✓ **Checklist of promising practices**

Partnership	**Process**	**Product**	**Dissemination**
Budget time for partnerships.	**Establish structure, roles, and procedures.**	**Budget resources for design.**	**Budget resources for dissemination.**
Are team members' budgets and time allocations appropriate given the roles and responsibilities of each partner?	Are there structures and processes in place that clearly communicate how to work as a team and the deliverables for each partner?	Are there funds and time allocations made for translation product design?	Are there funds and time allocations made for dissemination of products?
☐	☐	☐	☐

Click on the checkboxes

Tool:
■ *Conduct steps 3, 4, & 5 of Guiding Questions Workbook*

1	2	3	4	5
Start Up	Design	Planning	Implementation	Impact

4. Implementation

Continue to engage partners and stakeholders during implementation. Proactive engagement through the inclusion of partners and actors strengthens the research recommendations and ownership which in turn can affect and improve uptake. During the implementation phase, research teams should discuss the questions in the checklist below to follow the promising practices for each ERT pillar.

✓ Checklist of promising practices

Partnership	Process	Product	Dissemination
Clarify assumptions between actors.	**Establish regularly scheduled meetings.**	**Invest in understanding context.**	**Co-create targeted dissemination approaches.**
Is there clear understanding of each partners' expectations around data management, authorship, and intellectual property for research products?	Have all partners committed to attend regularly scheduled project meetings?	Is there a well developed understanding of the local people, values, culture, and politics that could influence uptake?	Is the dissemination strategy appropriate for the needs of each end-user?
☐	☐	☐	☐

Click on the checkboxes

Tool:
- *Revisit and update worksheets from steps 3,4,& 5 of the Guiding Questions Workbook*

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Start Up	Design	Planning	Implementation	Impact

5. Impact

Research impact is difficult to measure as a change in policy or practice generally does not result from one specific cause and impact may not be evident until after a project is completed. Despite this complexity, planning for impact can help to identify potential risks to research adoption and focus the research team on appropriate outputs. During the impact phase, research teams should discuss the questions in the checklist below to follow the promising practices for each ERT pillar.

✓ **Checklist of promising practices**			
Partnership	**Process**	**Product**	**Dissemination**
Build relationships for evidence uptake. Has the team discussed extending the partnership or developing new partnerships to ensure research impact?	**Monitor how dissemination translates to impact.** Has an evaluation of the research impact and uptake been conducted?	**Collectively decide how evidence is represented.** Is there agreement among team members on how to engage with and represent the findings and recommendations to each desired audience?	**Disseminate to wide range of institutions.** Are there clearly identified audience(s) and goals for dissemination?
☐	☐	☐	☐

Click on the checkboxes

Tool:
- *Update Research Translation M&E Worksheet from Guiding Questions Workbook* and *Watch the writing actionable products video*

Checklist to get started with Embedded Research Translation

Phase	*Click on the checkboxes*	✓
1. Start up Proactively involve diverse partners and stakeholders. Embed research translation from the beginning. **Tool:** *Conduct ERT Stakeholder Analysis*	**Emphasize relationship building** Are team members appropriately involved in an ongoing, open, and transparent decision-making process?	☐
	Agree on roles and responsibilities Are roles, responsibilities, and the level of engagement of each person on the team documented?	☐
	Engage end users early and often Are team members planning how to engage stakeholders to provide feedback on the ERT product(s)?	☐
	Conduct stakeholder analysis Has the team conducted a stakeholder analysis?	☐
2. Design Co-design research as equals, with participatory discussion and collaborative decision making. **Tool:** *Conduct steps 1 & 2 of Guiding Questions Workbook*	**Define the goal of research together** Have all partners documented and agreed upon why the partnership was created, the goal, and the research question(s)?	☐
	Establish shared vocabulary and communication style Are there processes in place to learn each team member's work environment, language, and communication expectations?	☐
	Agree upon, purpose, evidence, and product Have all partners documented and agreed upon the purpose for the research, how to collect evidence, and how that evidence will inform product design?	☐
	Co-design dissemination plan Has the team co-designed a dissemination plan before beginning research?	☐
3. Planning Collectively plan for research impact and uptake. **Tool:** *Conduct steps 3, 4, & 5 of Guiding Questions Workbook*	**Budget time for partnerships** Are team members' budgets and time allocations appropriate given the roles and responsibilities of each partner?	☐
	Establish structure, roles, and procedures Are there structures and processes in place that clearly communicate how to work as a team and the deliverables for each partner?	☐
	Budget resources for design Are there funds and time allocations made for translation product design?	☐
	Budget resources for dissemination Are there funds and time allocations made for dissemination of products?	☐
4. Implementation Engage partners and stakeholder throughout the research. **Tool:** *Revisit and update worksheets from steps 3,4,& 5 of the Guiding Questions Workbook*	**Clarify assumptions between actors** Is there clear understanding of each partners' expectations around data management, authorship, and intellectual property for research products?	☐
	Establish regularly scheduled meetings Have all partners committed to attend regularly scheduled project meetings?	☐
	Invest in understanding context Is there a well developed understanding of the local people, values, culture, and politics that could influence uptake?	☐
	Co-create targeted dissemination approaches Is the dissemination strategy appropriate for the needs of each end-user?	☐
5. Impact Collectively disseminate for impact and uptake. **Tool:** *Update Research Translation M&E Worksheet from Guiding Questions Workbook* and *Watch the writing actionable products video*	**Build relationships for evidence uptake** Has the team discussed extending the partnership or developing new partnerships to ensure research impact?	☐
	Monitor how dissemination translates to impact Has an evaluation of the research impact and uptake been conducted?	☐
	Collectively decide how evidence is represented Is there agreement among team members on how to engage with and represent the data to each desired audience?	☐
	Disseminate to wide range of institutions Are there clearly identified audience(s) and goals for dissemination?	☐