



Guidance on reporting outputs or outcomes

Output and outcome definitions

Research results can be defined according to the nature of the change and the control over it.

Output: Tangible products or services such as knowledge, technical or institutional advancement that result directly from CGIAR research, engagement and/or capacity development activities. They involve a change in knowledge or tools within the research process itself, produced under the control of the research team.

Examples include new research methods, policy analyses, gene maps, new crop varieties and breeds, institutional innovations or other products of research work, partnerships because of a signed memorandum of understanding.

Outcome: A change in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and/or relationships (KASR) of external actors. An outcome is a change in behavior that happens outside the research team, in people or organizations who interact with the research outputs. While the research influences these changes, the researchers cannot directly control them.

Examples include use of a new technology (including outputs like a seed variety) by farmers; policy actors using research-based knowledge to inform policy decisions; participants in a CGIAR-supported process agree to a new germplasm conservation and exchange protocols; researchers use CGIAR generated methods and/or databases. Key outcomes: Who will do what differently because of the Initiative.

Outputs and outcomes can be therefore distinguished according to the nature of the change (tangible products vs. changes in behavior or knowledge) and whether we have control (outputs are within control, while outcomes are influenced) as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Research results according to the kind of change and the control over it.

The following questions could help to clarify whether a product is an output (direct and controlled) or an outcome (influenced and external):

Who controls the results

1. Who has control over this product or result?
 1. Was this directly produced by the research team (output)?
 2. Or did it come from external actors using the research (outcome)?
2. What role did the research team play in achieving this result?
 1. Was the result fully within the research team's control (output)?
 2. Or did it require external actors to apply the research to create change (outcome)?

Nature of the change

1. What kind of change does this result represent?
 1. Is it a tangible product like a report, dataset, or publication (output)?
 2. Or is it a change in behavior, knowledge, attitudes, or skills of others (outcome)?
2. Is the result immediate or downstream?
 1. Did it emerge directly from the research process (output)?
 2. Or did it occur later as a result of the research being applied by others (outcome)?