

Recruiting for Evidence-informed policymaking (EIPM) and Knowledge Translation (KT)

CORE COMPETENCIES

Reference #1: Mallidou AA, Atherton P, Chan L, Frisch N, Glegg S, Scarrow G. Core knowledge translation competencies: a scoping review. BMC Health Serv Res 2018;18:502. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-018-3314-4>.

1. "Knowledge"
 - 1.1. Understanding the context
 - 1.2. Understanding the research process
 - 1.3. Sharing knowledge
 - 1.4. Being aware of evidence resources
 - 1.5. Understanding KT and EBP processes
 - 1.6. Understanding translation and dissemination activities
2. "Skills"
 - 2.1. Collaboration and teamwork
 - 2.2. Leadership
 - 2.3. Sharing knowledge
 - 2.4. Knowledge synthesis
 - 2.5. Dissemination of research findings
 - 2.6. Use of research findings (or research use)
 - 2.7. Fostering innovation
 - 2.8. Knowledge brokering
3. "Attitudes"
 - 3.1. Confidence
 - 3.2. Having trust
 - 3.3. Valuing research
 - 3.4. Self-directed lifelong commitment to learning
 - 3.5. Valuing teamwork
4. "Other"
 - 4.1. Knowledge of quality improvement methods and tools, communication strategies, and health policy and systems.
 - 4.2. Skills related to KT planning, project management, information technology use, sound judgment, and discretion/ tact/diplomacy and resourcefulness.
 - 4.3. Attitudes such as integrity, commitment to professional work ethic and behaviour in interaction with contacts, commitment to high standards of professionalism, and interest in the latest developments in communications.

Reference #2: Moore JE, Khan S. Core Competencies for Implementation Practice. Toronto: The Center for Implementation, 2020.
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b1150d95ffd205e7185bf2d/t/5e9ed8d8e188753f74bf6ce4/1587468523111/Core+Competencies+for+Implementation+Practice_v5.pdf

Implementation Activity	Implementation Core Competencies
Inspire Stakeholders and Develop Relationships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build a shared understanding 2. Achieve buy-in for the evidence and the use of implementation science to put the evidence into practice 3. Develop and maintain trusting relationships 4. Practice active listening 5. Reflect on your own contributions to the relationship 6. Manage distress 7. Encourage dialogue and new ideas
Build Implementation Teams	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Encourage a shared purpose 9. Develop the team 10. Manage conflict 11. Explore power dynamics 12. Highlight and affirm strengths and successes
Understand the Problem	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Use data to understand the problem 14. Critically reflect on the problem 15. Support individuals/groups to prioritize
Use Evidence to Inform all Aspects of Implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Synthesize and appraise evidence 17. If an evidence-based practice is selected, use evidence and theory to select implementation strategies 18. Adapt the program, practice, and/or implementation strategies to the local context
Assess the Context	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Assess readiness 20. Understand the system, context, and culture 21. Assess contextual fit 22. Understand power structures and adaptive challenges
Facilitate Implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 23. Use process models and frameworks to guide implementation 24. Identify champions 25. Motivate leaders 26. Develop and execute an implementation plan 27. Address resistance to change 28. Develop action plans to resolve challenges 29. Conduct quality improvement cycles
Evaluate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 30. Use a framework to guide evaluation 31. Assess implementation quality
Plan for Sustainability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 32. Build capacity for sustainability 33. Assess factors that influence sustainability, spread, and scale up 34. Develop a sustainability plan
Brokering knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 35. Foster partnerships 36. Leverage opportunities 37. Encourage evidence-informed decision making

ALSO: Jorge Barreto and Davi Romão from the Brazilian team are working in a Core Competencies document done with multiple Brazilian stakeholders. If you want a preview, write to them @ jorgeomaia@hotmail.com and davi@veredas.org

PROFILES

PROFILE #1: RESEARCHER

Description of tasks:

- Understand policy priorities;
- Conduct situational analysis / context assessments;
- Develop collaborative knowledge translation (KT) products such as rapid reviews, gap maps and evidence briefs;
- Map responsive evidence services and the overall evidence ecosystem;
- Engage stakeholders;
- Produce reports and synthesize lessons-learned for broad dissemination;
- Organize and/or facilitate webinars, workshops, mentorships and training sessions according to stakeholder needs;
- Broker knowledge.

Qualifications:

Senior researcher

- Master's or doctoral degree in a relevant field (public health, social sciences, public policies/management or related areas or similar)
- Minimum 05 years of experience in leading teams and projects
- Demonstrated track record of working with and facilitating engagements with government agencies (MoH, etc.), civil society/community organizations, and other key stakeholders
- Previous training in knowledge translation tools

Junior researcher

- Bachelor's in public health or a health-related area, economics, political science, international development or other relevant social science. A postgraduate degree is an advantage.
- Knowledge of research design/impact evaluation/econometric analysis/research synthesis. Previous experience developing evidence synthesis and knowledge translation products is an advantage.

All researchers

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including demonstrated ability to: prepare clear and concise emails, presentations, and reports
- High level of organization, attention to detail, professionalism, proactivity and strong team work ethics
- Experience drafting stories of change is desirable
- Experience engaging multiple stakeholders and facilitating workshops and trainings
- Excellent ability to work remotely
- Experience using project management tools
- Advanced language skills in English

PROFILE #2: NETWORK COORDINATOR

Description of tasks:

- Understand policy priorities;
- Conduct situational analysis / context assessments;
- Map responsive evidence services and the overall evidence ecosystem;
- Engage stakeholders;
- Produce reports and synthesize lessons-learned for broad dissemination;
- Organize and/or facilitate webinars, workshops, mentorships and training sessions according to stakeholder needs.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's in public health or a health-related area, political science, international relations, communications or other relevant social science. A postgraduate degree is an advantage.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including demonstrated ability to: prepare clear and concise emails, presentations, and reports.
- Experience drafting stories of change is desirable
- Demonstrated experience engaging multiple stakeholders and facilitating workshops, meetings and trainings
- High level of organization, proactivity and strong team work ethics
- Excellent ability to work remotely
- Advanced language skills in English

PROFILE #3: COMMUNICATION ADMINISTRATOR

Description of tasks:

- Map responsive evidence services and the overall evidence ecosystem;
- Engage stakeholders;
- Conduct interviews;
- Produce reports and synthesize lessons-learned for broad dissemination;
- Organize and facilitate webinars, meetings and events;
- Manage social media.

Qualifications:

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including demonstrated ability to: prepare clear and concise emails, presentations, social media content and reports.
- Experience drafting stories of change and storytelling
- Demonstrated experience engaging multiple stakeholders, and organizing and facilitating workshops, meetings and trainings
- High level of organization, proactivity and strong team work ethics
- Excellent ability to work remotely
- Advanced language skills in English

CHALLENGES

1. EIPM and KT tend to be a small-circle of usual suspects (all employed and overloaded with work!)

Map existing EIPM and KT training opportunities and contact the organizations who offer it to send out calls for applications on your behalf.

Try to develop courses for undergraduate students and follow up with participants who excelled.

Reach out to colleagues in universities who have Master's students seeking out a research subject.

Keep calls for applications always open and have an email for people to send CVs.

2. Project-funded wages/salaries are usually not sufficient for people who have more experience or live in different regions

Always offer part-time opportunities

Focus on applicants with less experience / have trainee programs

Contact international organizations who hire consultants in USD and see if they can partner up with you for hiring your team (i.e. R4D, INASP, On Think Tanks, EVIPNET WHO)

Try to identify civil society organizations or organizations who offer scholarships to join the project and cover half of the person's wage

Both of these last options could also work if your setting is very bureaucratic in terms of hiring people (i.e. governments, public universities)

3. It is hard to capture if the candidate is fitting in an interview!

Suggestion of questions:

- a) Tell us a bit about your experience with evidence-informed policy, knowledge translation, and stakeholder engaging. Is there an experience that you consider the most successful? Why is that?
- b) Can you describe what are the key activities that you think an evidence team should do to create legitimacy with stakeholders?
- c) What personal characteristics make you think you could contribute with an evidence team?

Have you ever thought about using [gamification](#) for recruitment purposes?

Maybe develop a case-study for people to show their abilities? You can either do a rapid review test-drive with the candidate or maybe give them a task to create from scratch a project!

Example

Activity: Case study analysis

Objective: Demonstrate technical and managerial capacity in project management

Deadline: You must respond to this email, attaching the material prepared from the activity, within two hours of receiving this message.

Case

A government sector with a huge budget and potential for future partnerships hired your team to carry out a project on the theme "Inclusive Education". In the conversation you had with the organization, they stated that the project should help to design the organization's performance in order to generate impact in your country. In this sense, they feel that it would be useful to better understand the idea of "Inclusive Education" and how other actors inside and outside the country have acted on this issue. They would also like to know what kind of interventions are more effective.

You will have the role of designing the project, leading the team, managing the project, and building the relationship with the funding organization.

Guiding questions:

- 1. How would you design this project, given its overall objective, specific objectives and methodology/tools, as well as available time and staff?*
- 2. How would you assemble the team and how would you manage them?*
- 3. What risks and opportunities do you identify in the project and how would you address them?*

4. Some candidates have the right attitude but are undertrained

Attitude goes a long way! That's why interviews are so important!

Have a trainee/mentorship program as a permanent offer to newcomers

Map [online courses](#) and [key-readings](#) that your new employees can engage with and preserve moments to exchange impressions/doubts about the content

Learn-by-doing-it-together! Methods for rapid reviews, gap maps and evidence briefs are best learned when done in pairs/teams