



Top Action Tips

Connecting researchers
and practitioners

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1: Set the scope

Publishers and editors should include an explicit statement in the journal's Aims & Scope and Submission Guidelines that indicates the editor not only values and welcomes but actively seeks submissions that align with one or more of the SDGs, in particular, SDG- related research with a specific, actionable connection to challenges and opportunities in practice.

2: Create special collections

Specifically solicit SDG and practitioner-aligned content for these special issues. These may serve as an initial step toward a goal of broad scope change.

3: Seed research ideas

Publishers, academic societies and practitioners should facilitate a collaboration between publishers, academic societies and practitioner networks to create an interdisciplinary shared forum where practitioners can share (and upvote) their urgent SDG-related research questions to help inform academic researchers' research agendas. Publishers and academic societies create other mechanisms (joint conferences) to foster academic researcher - practitioner communication.

4: Ask for implications

Editors should ask academic researchers to ask themselves - who is this research for? Ask academic researchers specifically to include in their Implications section the research outcomes relevant to practitioners. Also consider asking authors to create a separate summary of thesis relevant outcomes for sharing, as appropriate, with practitioners via plain language summaries and infographics in practitioner publications.

5: Insist on impact

Editors should ask reviewers to see if authors included comments on the relevance of the research for practitioners. Add a question about this on reviewer forms or include this guidance in reviewer instructions.

6: Make it visual

Publishers should create and distribute translated research via accessible, easily digestible formats to practitioners, publications, and organizations, including infographics, plain language summaries, and visual abstracts resonate with practitioners in many fields. One possible approach is to encourage journal authors to create these formats for their own research work (which may require support, training, or an optional author service). Another approach is to outsource this work to an organization that provides such services. Possible revenue streams to fund outsourcing could be industry advertising or sponsorship, payment by authors or institutions to have their research included in these efforts to ensure broader dissemination into practice, etc. There is some AI tech to assist with this.

7: Offer support

Publishers and academic societies should offer training, mentoring and support services to create opportunities for editors, researchers, practitioners and other writers to learn how to write for different audiences. Also include opportunities to learn to listen and partner equitably in order to foster research driven by challenges in practice.

8: Include practitioners

Editors should bring diversity to the editorial board by appointing practitioner editors on journal editorial boards to provide practitioner perspectives and connections. Leverage academic, professional, and civil societies that often include practicing scientists and clinicians to help identify an appropriate practitioner editor. This person can: help the journal connect to practitioner organizations to hear from practitioners what are the urgent research questions for the SDG(s); help researchers connect with practitioners for joint research projects; help select content suitable for translation and dissemination to practitioner markets; help the editorial board distribute to the practitioner associations the relevant research outcomes.

9: Reward contributions

Publishers and academic societies should create awards or similar recognitions for outstanding efforts in translating research. Creating award(s) that recognize author, reviewer, and editor efforts to translate research are good incentives to encourage these constituencies to be thinking about the relevance of research in practice when writing, reviewing, and evaluating papers.

10: Make joint sessions

Academic societies should encourage joint researcher and practitioner sessions within research conferences to share how research is being translated into practice, helping those doing this kind of work.