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Economic Impact Assessment: Proposed Changes to Evaluator Protocol

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Overview

- Background and Conclusions on Economic Impact Assessment Project
- Recommendations, Principals and Disclaimer
- Proposed Economic Impact Assessment Process
 - Tools and Materials
- Summary: How Evaluator Duties Change
- Discussion



Background

- Goals IUCRC Economic Impacts Feasibility Study
 - *To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current impact assessment strategy;*
 - *To assess the feasibility of improving the program's ability to obtain credible and persuasive quantitative estimates of economic impact; and*
 - *Based on these findings, to make recommendations for a strategy for routinizing the collection of such impact data on an ongoing basis.*



Major Conclusions

- Current evaluation strategy does a good job of capturing relatively short-term (but not long-term) impacts but often fails to provide quantitative estimates of their value
- Compendium of Technology Breakthroughs does a good job of capturing long-term “technological success stories” but often fails to provide quantitative estimates of their value
- Targeted (mature centers; outlier beneficiary) interview-based assessment strategy which includes option for confidentiality reliably documented long-term impacts and estimates of economic value ~ \$1.2 billion



Recommendations

- 1. Modify the Process/Outcome Questionnaire to emphasize relatively proximate quantitative economic impacts.*
- 2. Develop a standardized protocol and training system that facilitates collection of economic impact data by local evaluators.***
- 3. Develop a simple and compelling methodology for reporting the impact data to important stakeholder groups.*
- 4. Link the revised assessment activities with the efforts to periodically collect “technology breakthrough” cases.*



General Principles

- **Impact data collection should become a higher priority for evaluators at centers as they become more mature with an emphasis on Phase 2 and 3 of NSF funding**
- **Assessment should emphasize data collection via personal interviews of targeted high impact beneficiaries**
- **Must allow respondent the option of the case and/or the economic estimate remaining confidential in reporting**
- **A method for logging reports of forecasted impacts will be developed so that the evaluator can conduct follow-up interviews with informants in order to validate these estimates.**
- **A method for documenting the causal impact of IUCRCs, particularly when other factors may be involved, should be developed**
- **Since centers graduate from the IUCRC program and these mature centers are likely to be promising sources of transfer-derived economic impact, provisions must be taken to include graduated centers in this procedure**



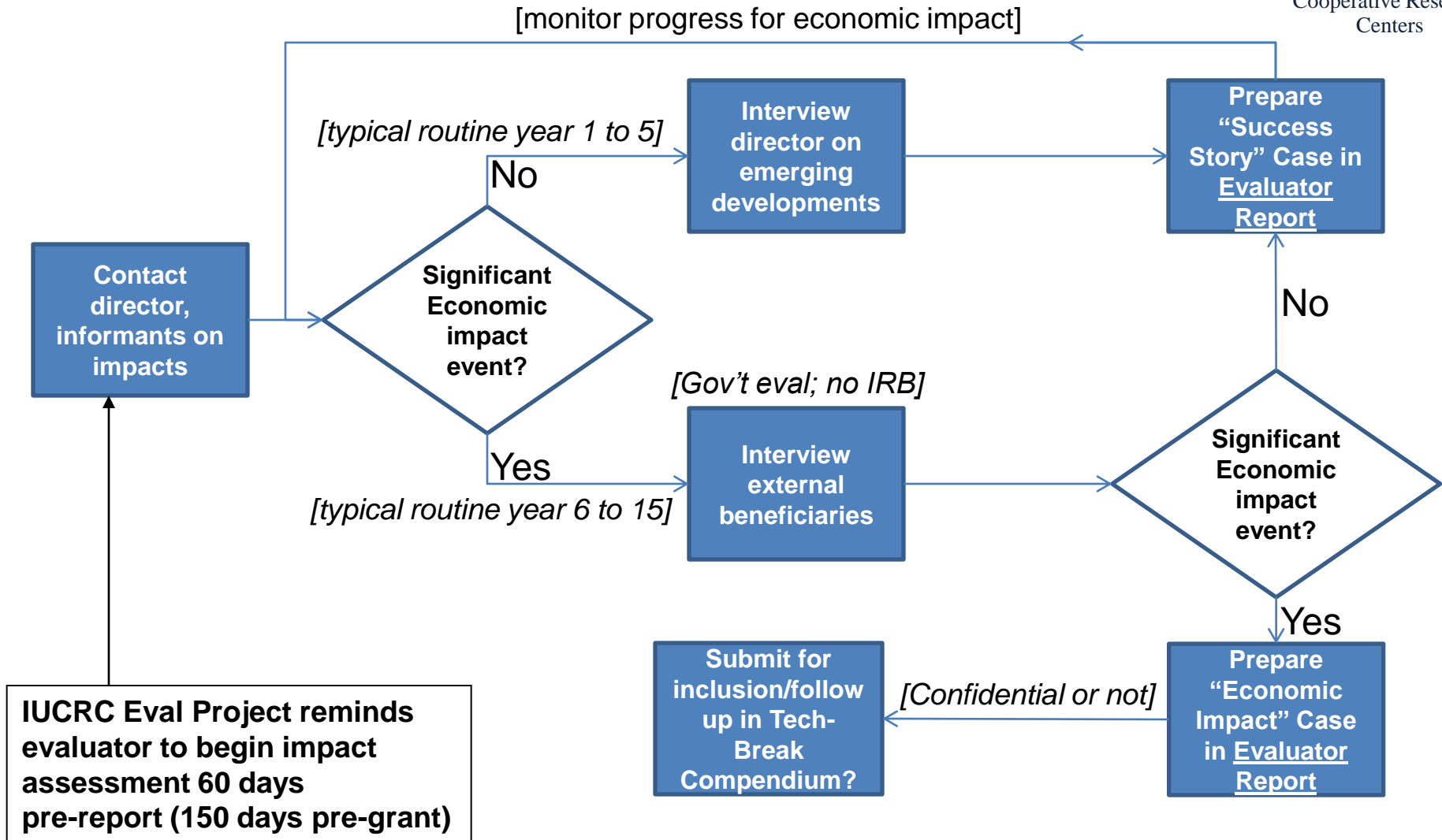
Disclaimers for our new role

- After 30 years of IUCRC evaluation experience and involvement in the economic impact study ...
 - Blockbuster impacts happen but they are few and far between
 - Expect a lot “we’re benefiting but nothing really big”
 - Many important center impacts cannot with all the nudging in the world be easily monetized
 - However, they can be documented and let the audience decide on their value
- There is no expectation or quota that every center will produce x breakthroughs or \$Y of impact

Proposed economic impact assessment process



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List of Economic Impact Assessment Tools and Materials*



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Economic Impact Assessment Procedure

EcoImpact 1: Email to directors introducing project

EcoImpact 2: Guidelines for identifying beneficiary organizations

EcoImpact 3: Guide for first contact briefing with center director

EcoImpact 4: Draft guide for interview with center director

EcoImpact 5: Draft email from center director to beneficiary

EcoImpact 6: Draft email from project team to beneficiary

EcoImpact 7: Guide for pre-screening interview with beneficiary

EcoImpact 8: Guide for interview with beneficiary

EcoImpact 9: Sample center-level report: ERC-inspired

* All material will be on www.ncsu.edu/iucrc

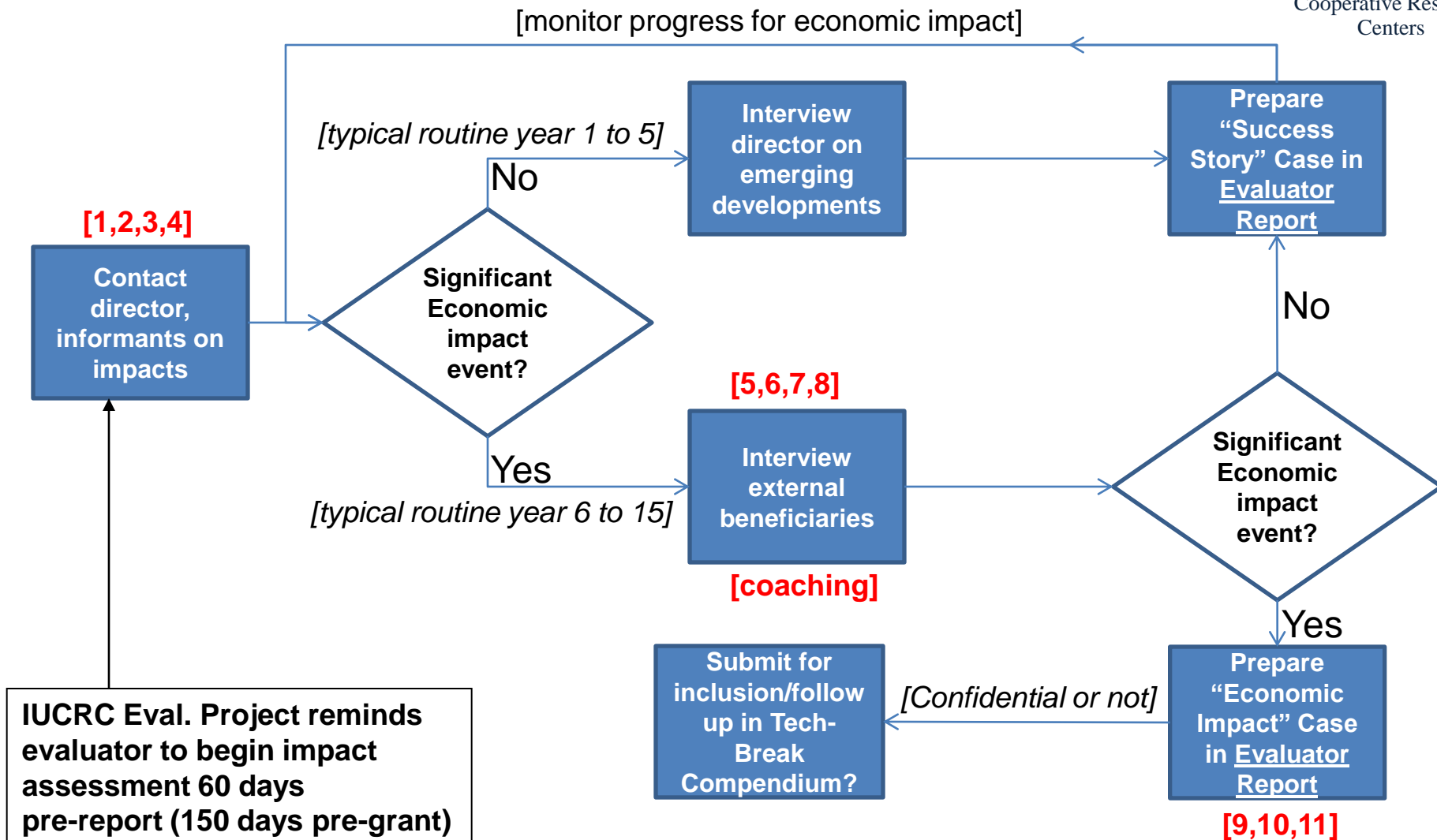


Coaching help for impact assessment

- NSF has provided travel and effort in the budget of the IUCRC Evaluation Project for telephonic and/or in person coaching for impact assessment interviews
 - Contact NCSU Evaluation Team



Resources for conducting assessments





How Evaluator Duties Change

- Begin exploring potential impacts earlier in reporting year
- Solicit nominations from multiple sources
- When warranted, engage in personal and/or telephonic interview with nominated beneficiary
 - Solicit help from IUCRC Evaluation Team on interviewing technique
 - Ask George Vermont what “SWAG” means
- Contact beneficiaries who are not members
- Engage in subsequent follow up interviews for early stage impacts that have forecasted economic value (document in Evaluator Report)
- Clarify whether case and/or economic impact must be kept confidential
- Prepare local and national report according to confidentiality understanding



Issues for discussion

- Identifying potentially “high impact” beneficiaries?
 - Interviewing my director and others about possible beneficiaries
- Getting access to potential beneficiaries
- Conducting the beneficiary interview
 - To be or not to be confidential
 - How to get an economic impact estimate
- What and where of my success story/economic impact report
- General discussion