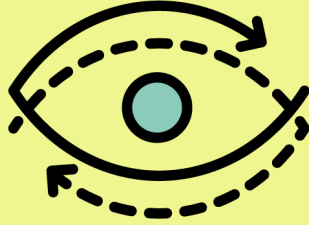


HOW TO GUIDE



TRUST_{parency}

How to Create and Implement a Reproducibility Promotion Plan (RPP) for Publishers

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Foreword

The **TRUSTparency project** aims to improve the trustworthiness of research by fostering transparency, collaborative policymaking, and field-specific approaches to reproducibility.

A central ambition of TRUSTparency is to support **Publishers** including **Journals** in developing their own **Reproducibility Promotion Plans (RPPs)**. An RPP is a practical tool that helps organisations identify, implement, and evaluate concrete interventions to promote reproducibility in research.

RPPs should be created by the publishers or journals themselves to ensure relevance to their specific context. Each RPP should describe what the Publisher or Journal will do to strengthen reproducibility of published research, including which interventions will be introduced.

An RPP should also describe how progress will be assessed, how responsibilities are distributed, and how often the plan will be reviewed and updated. In this way, RPPs function both as organisational guidelines and as flexible implementation frameworks that help translate reproducibility principles into practical and sustainable action.

This document provides **a step-by-step guide to creating and implementing an RPP**.

How to create and implement an RPP?

Introduction

This guide supports **Publishers and Journals** in designing and implementing a **Reproducibility Promotion Plan (RPP)**. An RPP is intended to help publishers and journals identify interventions, prioritise them and carry out concrete actions that strengthen replicability and reproducibility of the research they publish.

The guide is structured around the six-step cycle shown in **Figure 1**: A. Prepare, B. Create, C. Execute, D. Assess, E. Institutionalise, and F. Repeat. Together, these steps provide a practical framework for developing an RPP, putting it into action, evaluating progress, and embedding successful practices within the organisation.

Importantly, the model presents reproducibility promotion as a cyclical and iterative process rather than a one-off activity. In the first cycle, the publisher or journal prepares the groundwork, creates an RPP, implements selected interventions, assesses their effects, and works to institutionalise effective practices. In future cycles, the resulting RPP and the lessons learned during implementation provide the foundation for revising, improving, and implementing further interventions.

As input to the first cycle, organisations can draw on [TRUSTparency's toolbox](#) of reproducibility interventions and training materials. The Toolbox also provides training on how to work with the RPP framework, which consist of this *How to guide* as well as a *Primer* and a *Template* for writing an RPP.

The sections below introduce each of the six steps in **Figure 1** and provide guidance on how they can be used to develop, implement and continuously improve an RPP.

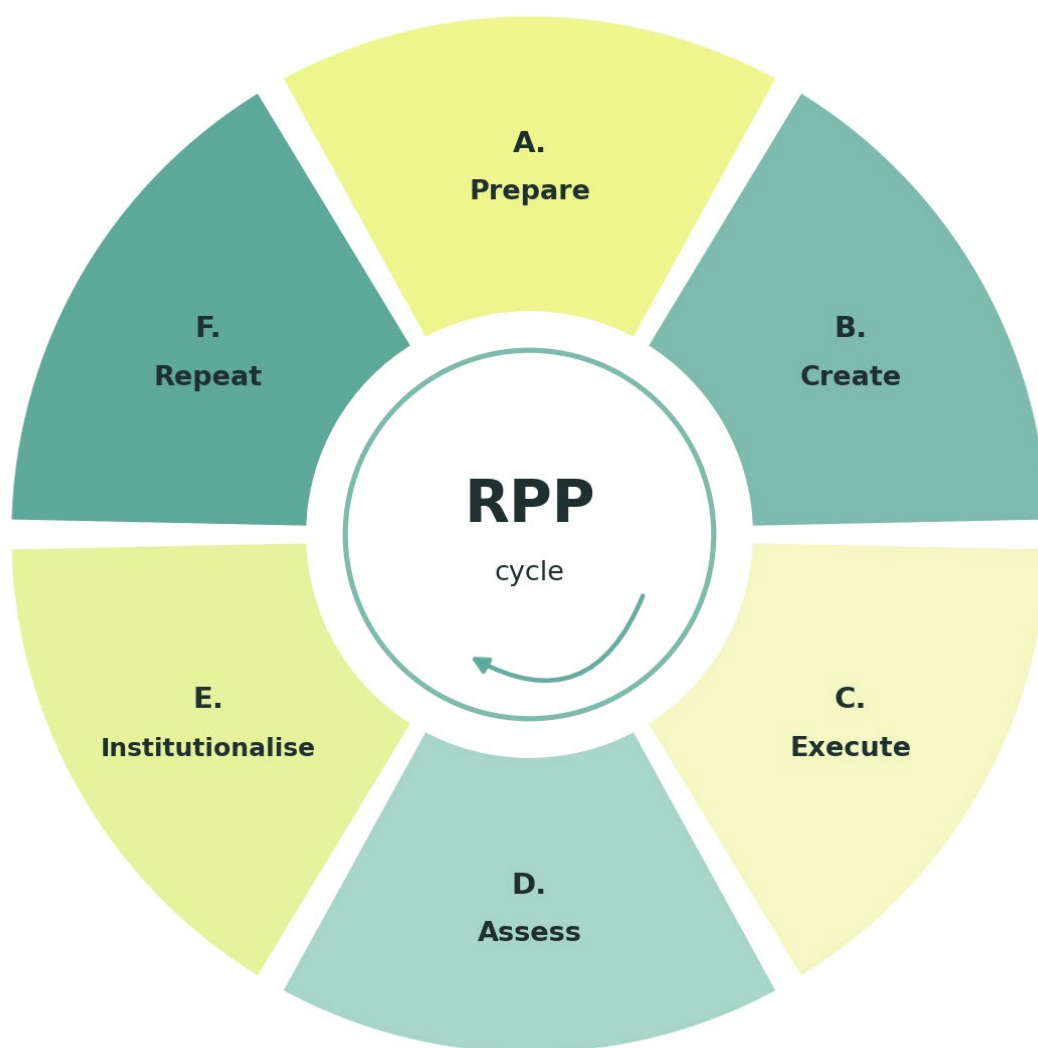


Figure 1: TRUSTparenity's design and implementation model for Reproducibility Promotion Plans (RPPs).

RPP**Step-by-step plan for creating and implementing an RPP**

In the following, we outline a step-by-step process for creating and implementing an RPP. It is important to underline that this guide represents one possible route towards developing an RPP. The process may look different in your organisation, depending on its needs, structures, resources, and context. This step-by-step guide should therefore be used as inspiration rather than a fixed model. The most important aim is to create an RPP that responds to real needs in the organisation and can be implemented in practice.

A**A. Prepare****Stakeholder involvement**

To ensure relevance and legitimacy, the development of a **Reproducibility Promotion Plan (RPP)** should be grounded in strong stakeholder involvement. For publishers, this may include editors, representatives from editorial boards, editorial offices, policy teams, and marketing and communication teams. For journals, editorial boards are particularly important, as they often represent the wider community around the journal. Publishers and journals may therefore begin with a stakeholder mapping to identify relevant internal and external stakeholders, including those with the greatest interest in reproducibility and those with the highest influence. Guidance on how to conduct **stakeholder mapping** is available [here](#).

At this early stage, it is important to have conceptual conversations with relevant stakeholders to clarify needs, expectations, possible overlaps with existing policies, and the potential role of the RPP. This dialogue should also address whether an RPP is needed, what purpose it should serve, and how it can complement rather than duplicate existing mechanisms. Publishers and journals should also remain open to community-driven needs that may inspire future reproducibility interventions.

Based on these discussions, the publisher or journal can develop a clear business case for why an RPP is needed and what added value it can bring. Potential benefits may include increased trust, reputational gains, reduced risks such as de-indexation, and alignment with external expectations, for example from funders who may increasingly expect publication in journals with reproducibility policies.

The organisation should also recognise that other structures, policies, committees, and procedures may already exist, some of which may be legally mandated or institutionally more powerful. The RPP should therefore not be developed in isolation, but should identify its specific niche and added value in relation to these existing structures.

In practice, responsibility for developing the RPP may be delegated to a small group within the organisation, such as a policy team within a publishing house. However, visible leadership support is essential for giving the process legitimacy, allocating resources, and engaging internal and external stakeholders. It is also important to keep relevant stakeholders informed throughout the process and invite them to comment on drafts and ideas.

The [TRUSTparenacy toolbox](#) contains quality-checked interventions that can support publishers' and journals' reproducibility efforts. It also includes training materials on key reproducibility concepts and co-creation.

Diagnosis

A core part of the preparation phase is to understand what kind of change is needed. The organisation should examine how reproducibility is currently supported, which policies, procedures, and commitments are already in place, and where there are gaps. This diagnosis should pay particular attention to existing commitments relevant to reproducibility, e.g. commitments linked to open science policies or research integrity frameworks. The publisher or journal should assess how these commitments overlap, where they differ, what specific obligations or expectations they create, and how they relate to the aims of the RPP.

This diagnosis can help identify which reproducibility problems need to be addressed and which interventions from **the TRUSTparenacy toolbox** the publisher or journal wants to implement to support better practices. It should also consider what resources, knowledge, tools, or guidance existing commitments already provide, which interventions have already been implemented, and what remains lacking. In this way, the diagnosis can help ensure that the RPP builds on existing work rather than duplicating it.

The diagnosis should also examine the conditions that may support or constrain the implementation of reproducibility interventions. This includes **considering the resources required**, such as funding, time, and infrastructure; the organisation's **receptiveness** to particular interventions, including existing knowledge, incentives, and regulations; and the **relevance** of different interventions for the type of research that the publisher or journal supports. [TRUSTparenacy's 9-dimensional classification scheme](#) can be used to structure this assessment. The diagnosis can also serve as a useful opportunity to identify existing good practices and consider how these can be strengthened, scaled, or built upon.

Assessing Readiness

After diagnosing needs and priorities, the organisation should assess its readiness to develop and implement the RPP. This means considering whether sufficient leadership support, resources, expertise, time, and organisational capacity are available. Key questions include: What budget is available? Where should the process begin? Which units are most in need of support, and which are most ready to engage?

The RPP does not need to be implemented everywhere at once. A publisher can start with one or two journals with editors and editorial boards with a high interest in reproducibility, who would be willing to experiment with developing and implementing an RPP. In this way, the publisher can test this intervention, learn from the experience, and create examples that can be used across similar journals. Beginning with achievable steps or “low-hanging fruit” can help build momentum and demonstrate the value of the RPP.

Identifying the Right People

A successful RPP depends on involving the right people. The publisher or journal should identify individuals and groups who can help shape, promote, and implement the plan across its publishing activities. It will be particularly important to involve staff who work directly with related policy areas.

The publisher or journal can form a community of those involved in the creation and implementation process of the RPP – a change coalition. Such a coalition should include both people with formal responsibility and authority over publishing policies and those with practical knowledge of how publishing requirements are interpreted and implemented by journals. The aim is to create a supportive and experimenting environment where reproducibility can be discussed openly, where challenges and unintended consequences can be identified, and where new expectations, guidance, or requirements can be developed in feasible and field-sensitive ways.

Policy and implementation expertise within the publisher or journal can help ensure that reproducibility guidance, reporting expectations, and documentation requirements are clear, proportionate, and suited to the journal’s scope and disciplinary context. It can also help identify gaps in editorial procedures, peer review processes, author guidelines, and support structures.

Some members of the change coalition may need training to support the RPP process effectively. Training can help establish a shared understanding of reproducibility among editorial staff, editors, reviewers, production teams, and other stakeholders, and align expectations for how reproducibility should be addressed in author guidelines, peer review, editorial decisions, reporting requirements, and journal workflows. Relevant training materials are available in [the TRUSTparenity toolbox](#).

Together, these steps help ensure that the RPP becomes a practical tool rather than just a policy document, supporting reproducibility through journal policies, editorial workflows, peer review, and engagement with research communities.

B**B. Create**

In this step, the **Reproducibility Promotion Plan (RPP)** is written. The RPP should describe which reproducibility topics will be addressed, how they will be addressed, which interventions will be used, and who will be responsible for carrying them out. It is crucial to be specific and to provide links to relevant resources, such as [training materials](#).

Publishers and journals may approach the RPP as a flexible suite of options, allowing editorial teams to select interventions that fit their journal's scope, community, and workflows. The RPP should be informed by the publisher's or journal's principal research areas, the capacities and practices of the research communities it serves, and the support structures available to authors, editors, and reviewers. This helps ensure that reproducibility goals are realistic, proportionate, and well aligned with different research contexts.

Creating the RPP involves at least the following seven steps:

1. **Specifying goals:** Define goals for change at the journal and organisational levels.
2. **Ensuring employee participation:** Involve relevant staff and stakeholders to create legitimacy for the envisioned change. The organisation can draw on the stakeholder mapping carried out in the previous step (see A. Prepare) to identify who should be involved and to agree on a shared vision for both the process and the outcome of the change.
3. **Describing the organisational setup:** Explain how the envisioned change will be implemented within the publisher or journal, including relevant structures, roles, and responsibilities.
4. **Using TRUSTparenacy's toolbox:** Identify the interventions and training materials in the TRUSTparenacy toolbox that best match the goals. It is important that the RPP remains discipline-sensitive and relevant to the publisher's or journal's focus area. Publishers and journals can identify research contexts where reproducibility is particularly important and provide targeted guidance on how appropriate standards can be maintained.
5. **Specifying actions and responsibilities:** Describe the concrete actions to be taken, who will be responsible for each intervention, who will be accountable, and who will lead the process.
6. **Setting the timeline:** Define the timeline for implementing the interventions included in the RPP.

7. **Specifying indicators and targets:** Identify the indicators and targets that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the interventions.

A template for writing an RPP can be found [here](#). Organisations may also use their own templates if they already have institutional templates for change projects.

It is important to emphasise that the first RPP can also help fertilise the ground for future RPP cycles. In particular, it can support broader cultural change by contributing to a more open, safe, and inclusive research culture — one that is more receptive to experimenting with and testing future reproducibility interventions.

When writing the plan, publishers and journals should also consider how the RPP will be communicated to authors, emphasising its benefits rather than presenting reproducibility requirements as an additional burden.

C**C. Execute**

In this step, the **Reproducibility Promotion Plan (RPP)** is put into practice. Before implementation begins, those involved — including the change coalition — should have a shared understanding of the plan's purpose, the intervention(s) to be introduced, and their respective roles and responsibilities.

If the RPP introduces significant changes to publishing workflows, editorial procedures, author guidelines, or peer review requirements, a gradual implementation process may be useful. This may include pilot tests, small-scale experiments, or targeted initiatives in selected journals, allowing the publisher or journal to learn from practice before scaling up.

During implementation, affected groups should be able to provide feedback and suggest adjustments. This may include editors, editorial board members, editorial office staff, reviewers, authors, production teams, and policy or publishing teams. Once feedback has been evaluated and any pilots completed, the change coalition should agree on next steps, such as revising the RPP, adapting interventions, or expanding implementation to other journals.

D**D. Assess**

Assessment is a crucial part of the RPP cycle. After implementation, the organisation should assess whether the selected interventions are producing the intended outcomes and whether any unintended effects have occurred. This

assessment should be based on the indicators and targets defined when the RPP was created. The assessment should consider both the effects of the interventions and the resources required to implement them.

Assessment should also support learning beyond the publisher or journal. TRUSTparenacy has developed an [Intervention Experience Sharing Form](#), which organisations can use to document and share their experiences with reproducibility interventions. Completed forms can be uploaded to the TRUSTparenacy [website](#). By sharing experiences, organisations contribute to an international network committed to improving reproducibility through shared good practices, challenges, and solutions.

In addition, the assessment may consider the wider operational, editorial, and strategic implications of the RPP. This could include effects on submission rates, author and reviewer experiences, editorial workload, publication timelines, and the perceived quality or suitability of submissions. Where submission quality is assessed, the organisation should define in advance which indicators will be used, such as completeness of reporting, availability of data or code, adherence to journal guidelines, or reviewer and editor feedback.

E

E. Institutionalise

At this stage of the cycle, the publisher or journal should embed successful elements of the RPP into its longer-term structures, procedures, and culture. Based on the assessment, the RPP should be revisited and updated where needed, and resources and responsibilities should be allocated for continued implementation.

The experience gained through pilots, targeted initiatives, and the work of the change coalition should be translated into organisational policies, editorial procedures, author and reviewer guidance, workflows, and support systems. Effective reproducibility interventions should become part of regular practice and provide a stronger basis for the next RPP cycle.

Where interventions have been tested in selected journals, the publisher or journal should consider whether and how they can be scaled up to a wider set of journals. This should be informed by lessons learned during piloting and implementation, including what worked well, what required adjustment, and what resources or responsibilities are needed for broader adoption. When successful, new recommendations or policies can also act as a catalyst for wider change in the field.

To sustain the RPP over time, publishers and journals should maintain stakeholder engagement, transparency, clear ownership, and, where relevant, links to external bodies or communities (e.g. COPE). This can help ensure that reproducibility efforts remain legitimate, responsive to community needs, and aligned with wider developments in publishing and research practice.

For long-term implementation, the organisation should also consider how reproducibility-related information can be made technically manageable across submission systems, peer review platforms, editorial workflows, reporting processes, and journal websites. At the same time, it should assess the risks and limits of automation. As submission volumes increase, including through the use of generative AI tools, automation may help support checks, monitoring, and documentation, but should not replace careful editorial judgement when evaluating reproducibility or replicability.

F**F. Repeat**

The RPP process should be repeated regularly. Each new cycle should build on what was learned in the previous one. Lessons from the previous cycle should be used to revise the RPP and shape priorities for the next cycle.

However, not all steps need to be repeated in full in every cycle. For example, once the publisher or journal has assessed its readiness, identified the right people, and established relevant structures, later cycles may focus more on monitoring progress, updating priorities, revisiting TRUSTparency's toolbox, and responding to new needs or developments in publishing practice and research communities.

Publishers and journals may decide for themselves how often to repeat the cycle, but every second year may be a useful rhythm. To avoid unnecessary administrative work, the RPP cycle can be linked to existing review processes, such as journal development plans, editorial board reviews, publisher policy reviews, portfolio assessments, or strategy reviews.

Repeating the cycle helps keep the RPP relevant and useful. It also allows publishers and journals to continue experimentation and adjustment as the RPP is updated, drawing on lessons learned during piloting, implementation, assessment, and scaling. Over time, this can help make reproducibility a more integrated part of editorial workflows, journal policies, peer review practices, and the wider publishing culture.

About this document

This document was developed through a co-creation process involving internal TRUSTparency seminars and three workshops with representatives from RPOs, RFOs, and publishers. We gratefully acknowledge the workshop participants for their valuable input.

The work builds on the **Research Integrity Promotion Plan** framework developed in the SOPs4RI project, especially the guideline [How to create and implement a Research Integrity Promotion Plan \(RIPP\)](#) by Serge P.J.M. Horbach and Mads P. Sørensen.

During the preparation of this document, an AI tool (Chat GPT 5.5) was used to support the development of the figure and graphics, and for improvements to readability and clarity. All AI-generated outputs were critically reviewed and edited by the authors.