A guide to implementing a Research Impact Analysis

The Research Impact Analysis (RIA) is the foundation on which the whole Research Continuity process is built. The RIA identifies the urgency of each activity undertaken by a unit; by assessing the impact over time of an interruption of an activity. The information from the RIA should be used to identify appropriate timescales for the resumption of activities individually and in relation to one another.

MRC Corporate Safety, Security & Resilience have designed a RIA template for use by individual units which is broken down into columns A - Q to ensure that the impacts of disrupting activities that support the unit are assessed.

**Column A - Department Name**
In this column, define the location or department.

**Column B - Critical Activities (including Description)**
Critical activities are those activities whose loss would have the greatest impact in the shortest time and which need to be recovered most rapidly. Each activity should support one or more key product or service. Each Critical Activity should have a recovery priority based on the RTO. All dependencies for each critical activity should be identified.

**Column C – Maximum Tolerable Period of Disruption (MTPD)**
The Research functions should determine the maximum tolerable period of disruption (MTPD) - the period before there is a **significant effect on the unit** from this function not being carried out. The following 3 criteria should be used when determining the MTPD:

- Maximum time period within which activity needs to resume
- Minimum level at which the activity needs to be performed
- Length of time by when normal levels of operation need to be performed

**Column D – Recovery Time Objective (RTO)**
Once the MTPD has been determined, the ‘dependencies’ should be able to confirm that the recovery time objective (RTO), for provision of adequate contingency resources, is less than the MTPD. For example, if a function needs to be able to correspond electronically with participants within 24 hours of an incident (MTPD), then IT should provide an assurance that the availability (RTO) of email is less than 24 hours.

**Column E – Critical Times of Day, Week, Month, Year**
In this column, indicate any times during the calendar (e.g. year end, month end, pay day etc) that are regularly busy periods.

**Column F – Minimum Numbers to Function**
This is the minimum number of staff a department requires to recover a specific critical activity within the RTO and then perform that activity in the short term.

**Column G – Critical Staff**
These are specific named members of staff who are critical to this activity, by virtue of their knowledge and skills and without whom the activity would not be possible.
Column H – Computer Terminals Required
In this column, indicate the number of computer terminals that your department would require in order to carry out work function during a crisis. This may be a terminal for each member of the team.

Column I – Scientific Research Equipment Required
Indicate what equipment is required by the department during a crisis. e.g. -80 freezers

Column J – Location Dependencies
Is this activity dependant on being at a particular site or located near to a particular MRC department or service or a particular third party.

Column K – Critical IT Applications Required
In this column, indicate any computer applications that you require in order to carry out the critical activity.

Column L – Recovery Point Objective
The point in time to which data has to be recovered in order to prevent (Research) intolerable effects e.g. failure to comply with regulations and/or serious impact on reputation.

Column M – Critical Suppliers (Contracts and SLAs)
Indicate any suppliers you rely on. Do you have contracts or SLAs with them?

Column N – Mutual Aid Sites
Are there any locations able to provide space and seating should you be unable to enter your normal place of work. Please indicate how many seats are available to you at this location, and who you would contact to invoke this contingency.

Column O – Home Working Options
How many people carrying out the critical activity are able to do so from home; and any specific tools that you would need to carry out this activity.

Columns P and Q – Staff required to work from the start of disruption to support critical activities
In the columns indicate how many staff you would need to be functional after 24 and 48 hours in order to continue to carry out the activity to the required level.