

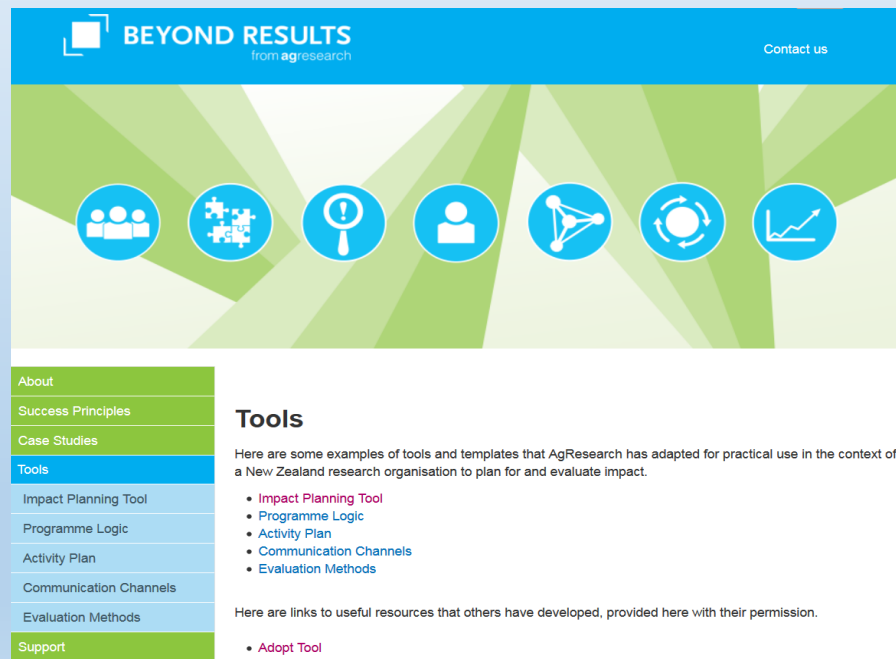
# Transforming research organisations via monitoring, evaluation and learning: how can we evaluate our own work?



Larelle McMillan, Helen Percy, Samantha Stone-Jovicich, Toni White, Lan Chen

---

# Building a culture of impact thinking and practice within our organisations



**BEYOND RESULTS**  
from **agresearch**

Contact us

About  
Success Principles  
Case Studies  
**Tools**  
Impact Planning Tool  
Programme Logic  
Activity Plan  
Communication Channels  
Evaluation Methods  
Support

## Tools

Here are some examples of tools and templates that AgResearch has adapted for practical use in the context of a New Zealand research organisation to plan for and evaluate impact.

- [Impact Planning Tool](#)
- [Programme Logic](#)
- [Activity Plan](#)
- [Communication Channels](#)
- [Evaluation Methods](#)

Here are links to useful resources that others have developed, provided here with their permission.

- [Adopt Tool](#)



People Polls Calendars Create

Pages Favourite Watch Share

## Impact toolkit: changing the conversation from 'what' to 'why'

Created by Majewski, Shane (IM&T, Black Mountain), last modified by Hays, Renate (SM&I, Black Mountain) on Apr 06, 2016

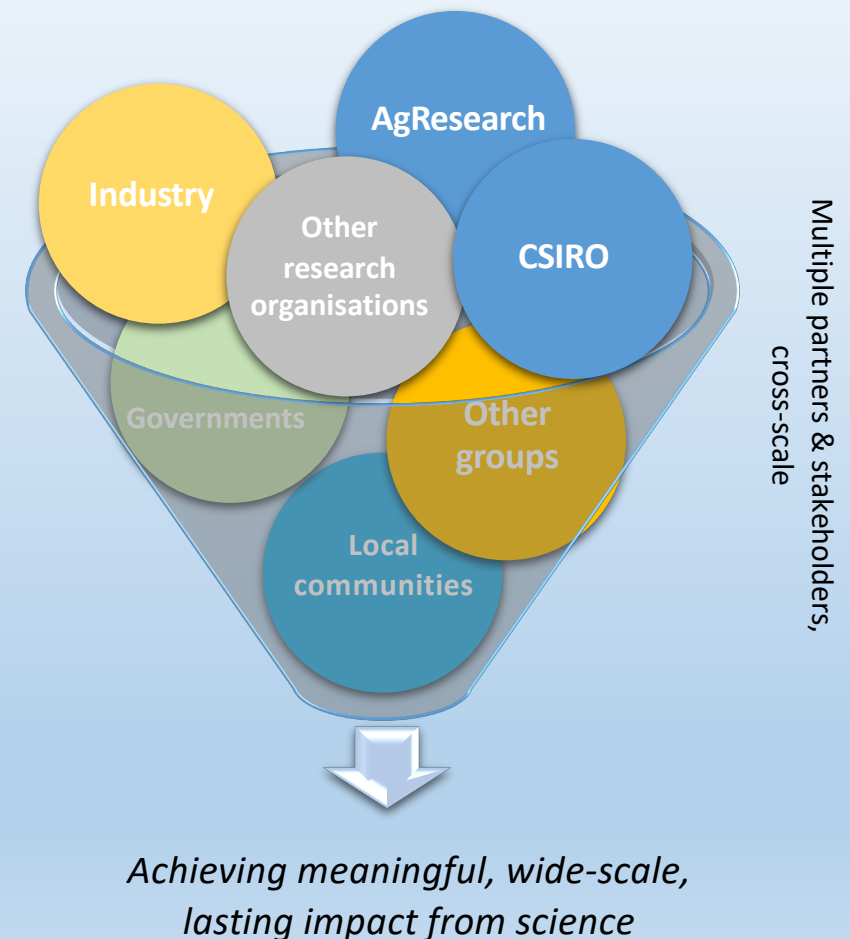


The aim of this Toolkit is to facilitate the institutionalisation of impact within enterprise, portfolio and divisional planning, monitoring and evaluation across CSIRO.

<b>ABOUT THE TOOLKIT</b> 	<b>THE METHODOLOGY</b> 	<b>HOW-TO GUIDES</b> 
<b>TOOLS &amp; TEMPLATES</b> 	<b>RESOURCE LIBRARY</b> 	<b>GLOSSARY</b> 

# Building a culture of impact thinking and practice within our organisations

- Collecting **evidence along the way**
- **Enhancing our understanding** of how and why impacts were achieved (or not)
- Increasing **reflection** (amongst scientists/project-level) and at management levels
- Addressing **organisational barriers/incentives**



# Monitoring, evaluation and learning



What are the benefits?

Is it worth the effort?

How do we know?



## .. Scientists can be a sceptical bunch!

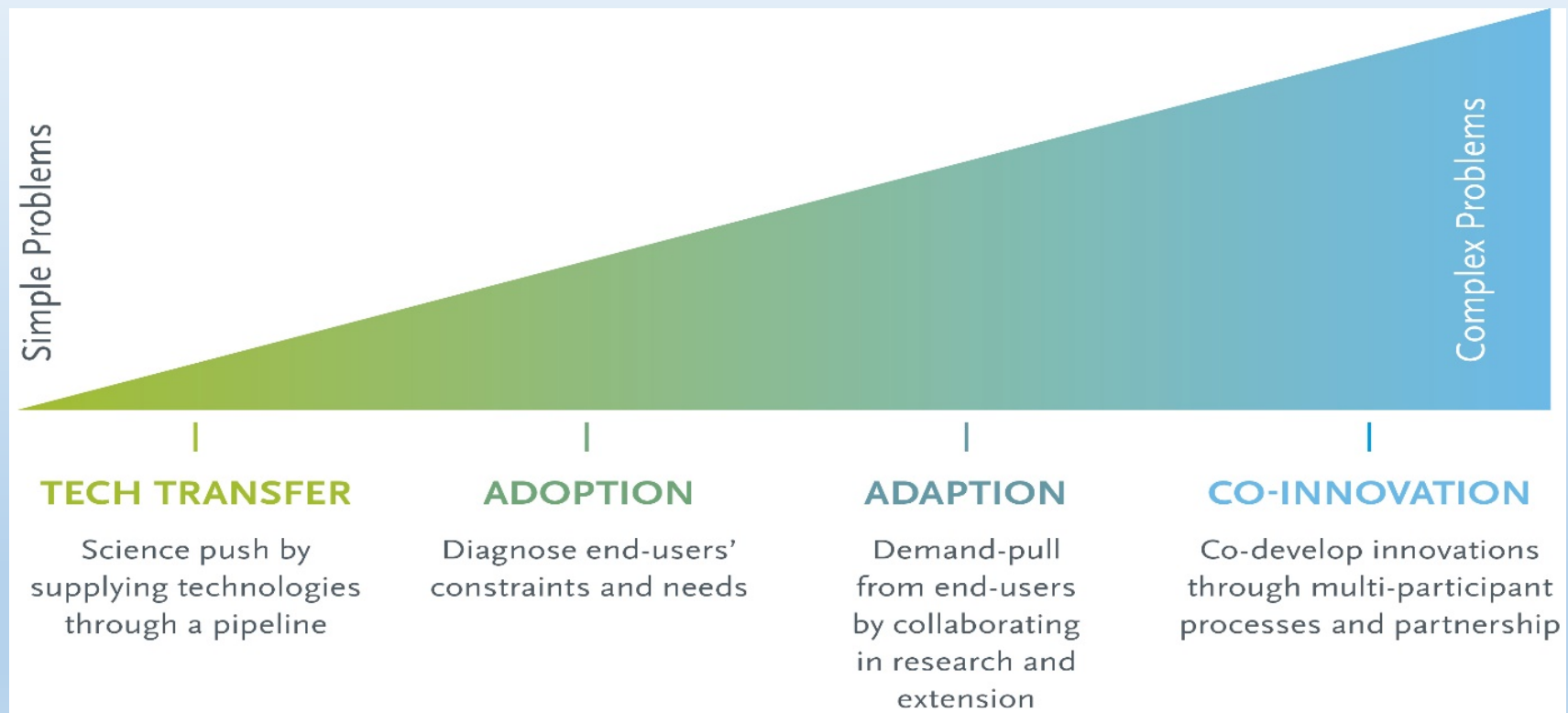
“It is very hard at the moment to see that recording information related to M&E is adding more value - we are under pressure to do research first.” (Senior scientist)

## .. But others are on board

“**Our stakeholders need to know what we have achieved.** We need to be able to show them our relevance and be specific about it.

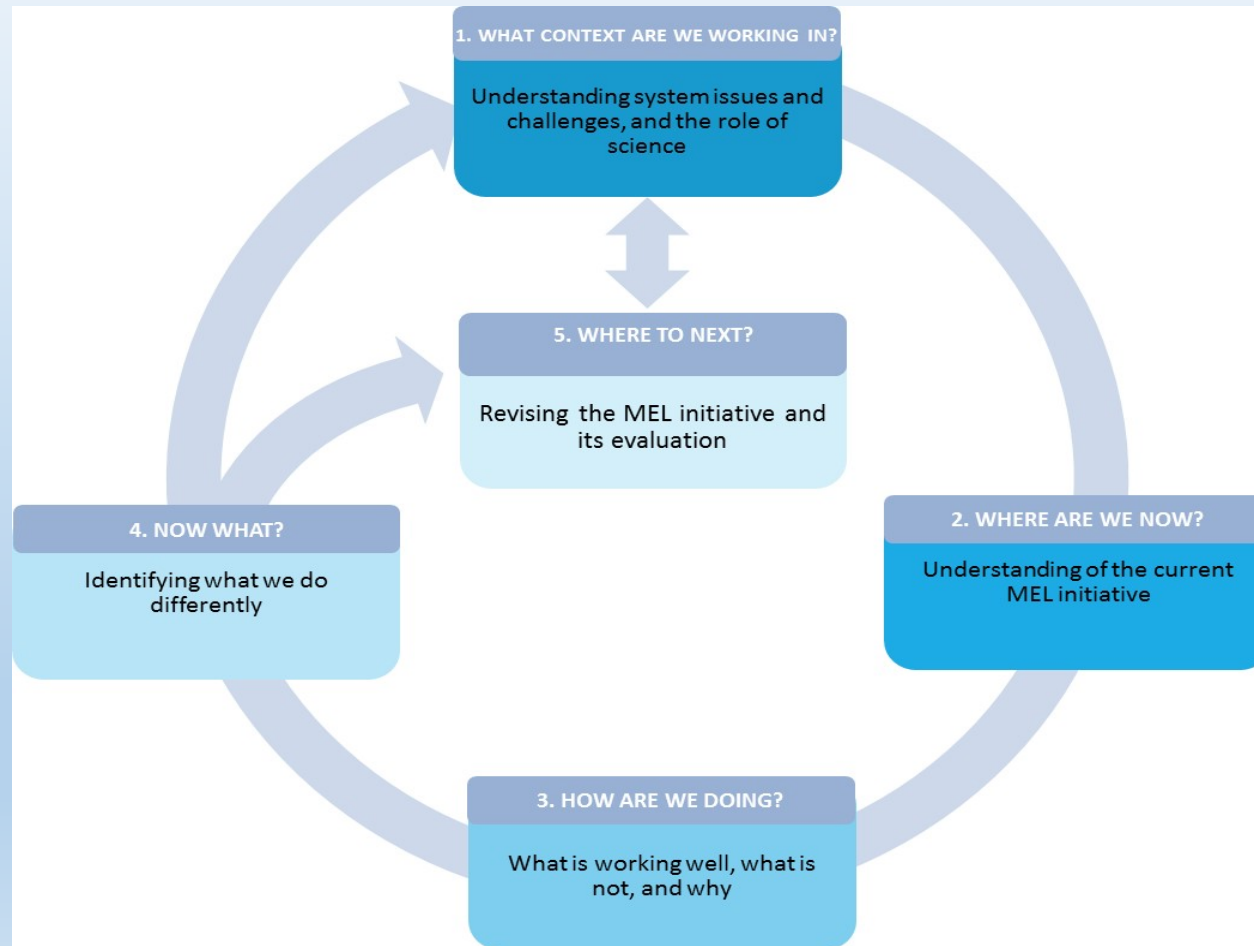
[We have] got to commit to make the change and **capture impacts as they happen and this is the method for doing it.**” (A different senior scientist)

# Tackling the spectrum of MEL required



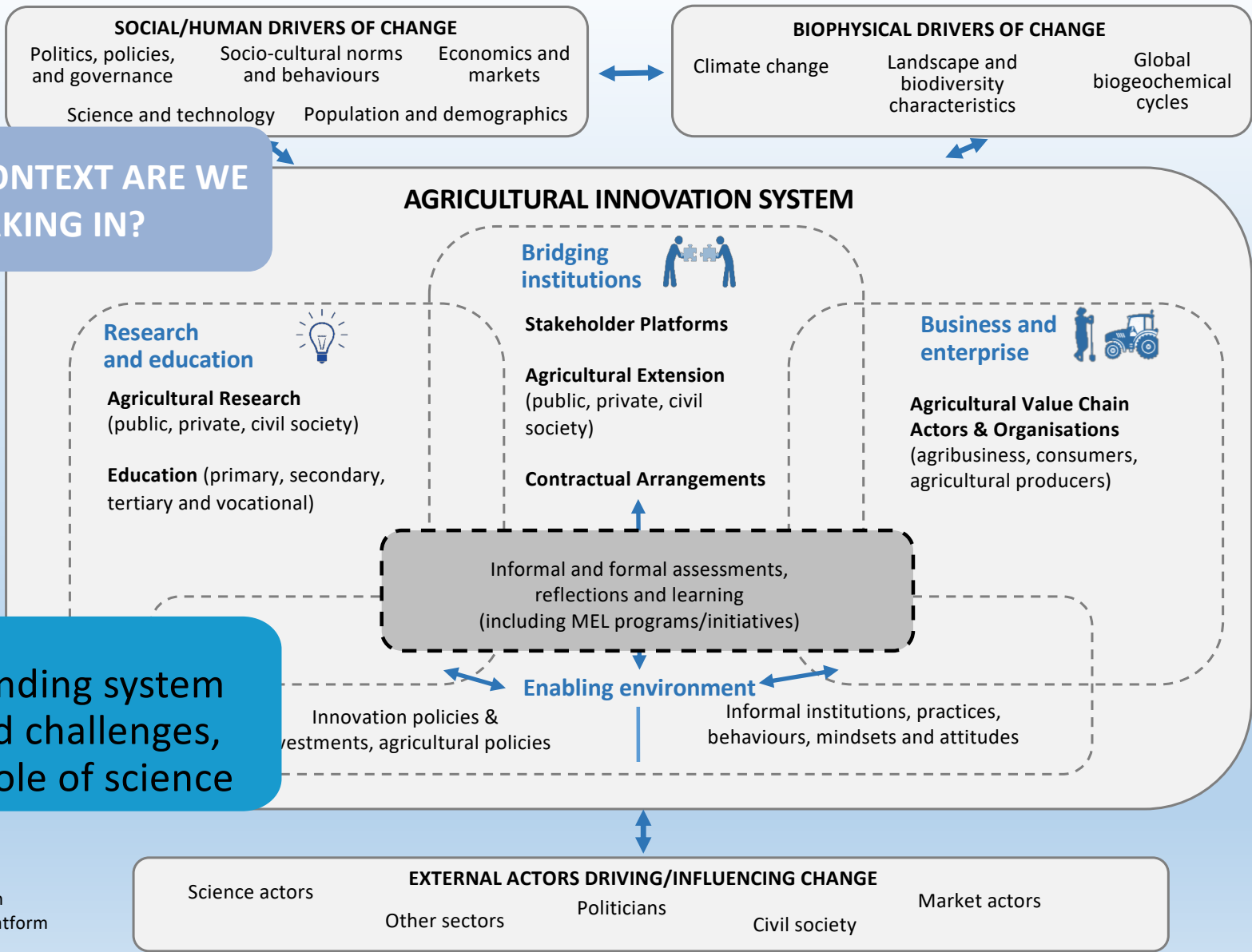
Source: [www.beyondresults.co.nz](http://www.beyondresults.co.nz). Adapted from: Klerkx et al., (2012) In: *Farming Systems Research into the 21st Century* 457-483; NZ Ministry for Primary Industries Extension Framework.

# We've set ourselves the challenge: MEL of MEL!



1. WHAT CONTEXT ARE WE WORKING IN?

Understanding system issues and challenges, and the role of science



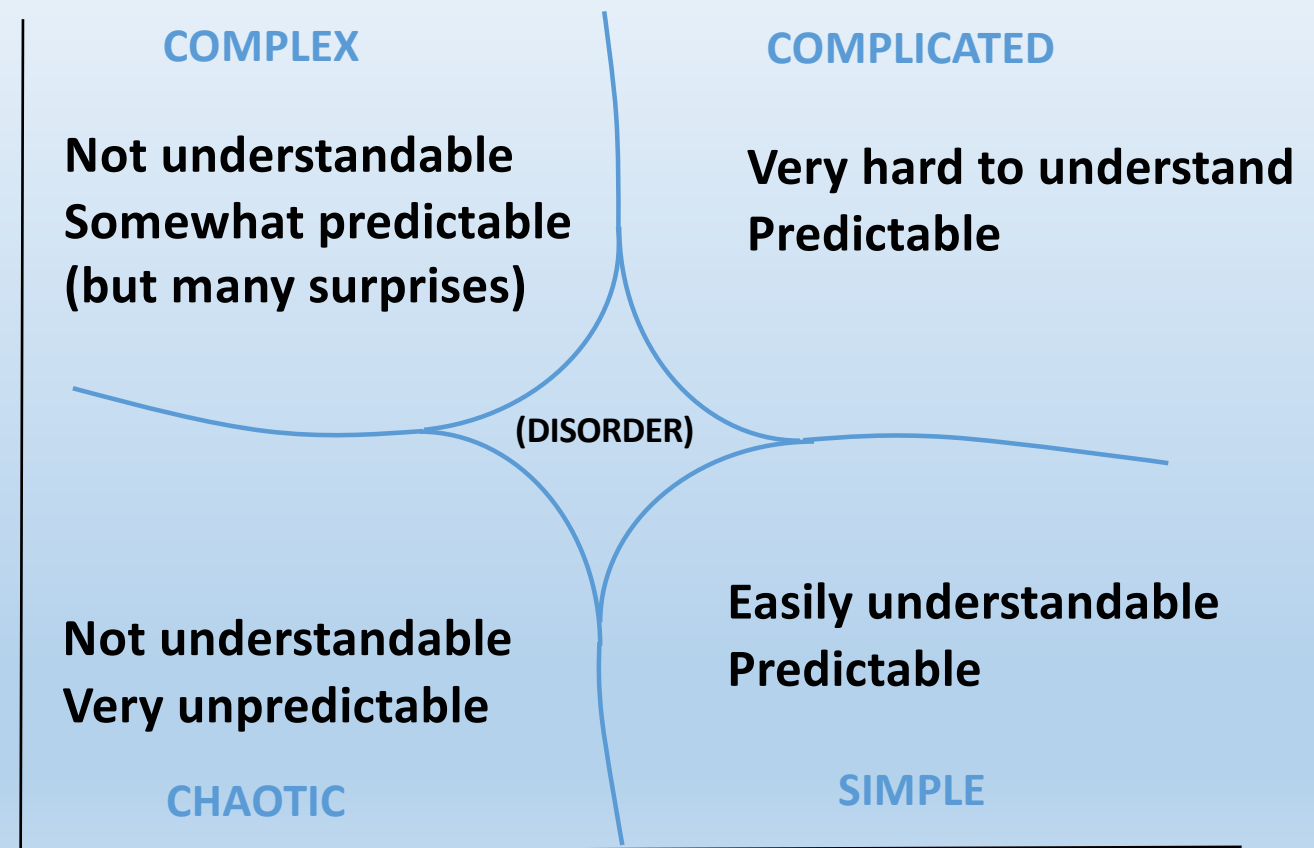
SOURCE: Adapted from Tropical Agriculture Platform (2016)

## 1. WHAT CONTEXT ARE WE WORKING IN?

How challenging are these problems?

What are the changes needed to address different challenges?

What role does research play?



Cynefin Framework (Snowden & Boone, 2007)

## 2. WHERE ARE WE NOW?

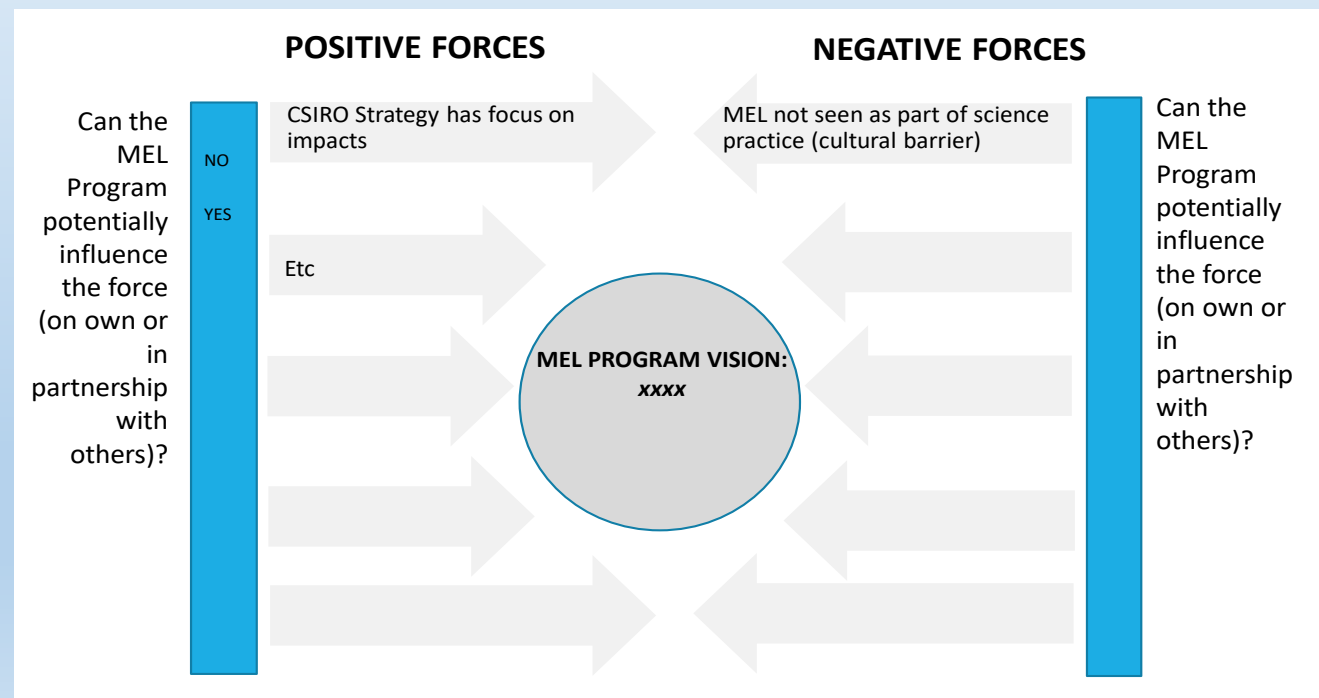
Understanding the  
current MEL  
initiative

What is being done? (activities/ products)

Why is it being done (rationale; gaps; needs)?

What is going to change?

Positive and negative forces?



### 3. HOW ARE WE DOING?

Individual interview questions for participants involved in MEL initiative

What is working well, what is not and why?

*“The work I do is impact focused – so hasn’t been a culture shock – it’s reinforced how hard it is to monitor these things; and the resources required to do proper M&E.”*

*“... it’s making me realise this is a specialised field and a discipline in itself... a conclusion from that is – how reasonable is it to expect scientists who were employed with specialist skills to turn into M&E specialists”*

*“Learning by doing has been good – having to write an impact story on a page (with evidence) has been a good process – it’s been a tangible cause to stop and think and do...”*

## 4. NOW WHAT?

Identifying what we  
do differently

## Collective reflection on outputs of phases 1-3

Reflection/sense-making questions

*Questions can be asked at each of phases 1-3 and themed*

In general, we noticed...?

What were we surprised by....?

Are there any gaps/recommendations we need to make?

What should we do differently, at different scales (organisation to project)?

What assumptions do we have about what we were hoping to achieve?

What do we know now that we didn't know when we started? E.g. new science/knowledge/methodologies etc.

Adapted from Guijt and Oakden (2016)



## 5. WHERE TO NEXT?

Revising the MEL  
initiative and its  
evaluation

Drawing on the insights from phases one to three and utilising the reflection from phase 4, this phase is about collaboratively revisiting or developing the MEL initiative's *theory of change*.



Does the framework resonate?

Have you seen other frameworks for assessing whole of MEL initiatives?

How do we manage more transformational bodies of work?



# Thank you

This work has been funded through a CSIRO-AgResearch Linkage Grant (2017-18)

Thank you to our colleagues and respective organisations involved in this on-going collaboration