

# PATHWAYS TO IMPACT FRAMEWORK



SOUTHERN NSW  
**Innovation Hub**

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE,  
LANDSCAPES AND COMMUNITIES

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**SA  
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**TAS FARM**  
INNOVATION HUB

Growing Climate Resilient Communities

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Southern NSW Innovation Hub  
Pathways to Impact Framework

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## Purpose of the Framework

Australia has a proud history of agricultural innovation; built on decades of research, industry collaboration, and farmer know-how. **But great ideas alone don't create impact.** For innovations to improve farming systems, resilience, productivity, equity, or sustainability, they must be understood, trusted, used, and supported. That's where good extension and adoption come in.

The Pathways to Impact Framework is a practical tool for those working across research, development, extension, investment, and delivery to design initiatives with real-world uptake in mind; right from the start.

Impact isn't just about productivity. It includes environmental stewardship, social wellbeing, economic resilience, cultural values, and equity of access. This Framework recognises that agricultural innovation plays a role in all of these outcomes and is a powerful vector for change.

Whether you're delivering an on-ground program, shaping strategy, writing a funding bid, or improving an existing initiative, the Framework can help clarify the problem, engage meaningfully with stakeholders, and **build a stronger path from idea to impact.**

Importantly, it highlights the opportunity to unlock greater value across the entire research, development and extension (RD&E) continuum. By planning for integration into practice earlier and more intentionally, we can ensure that fit-for-purpose innovations reach the right people, in more meaningful ways, and deliver broader impact.

## What this Framework is and isn't

**This Framework is not a rigid blueprint or academic model.** It's a flexible, practical guide grounded in what works; designed to help you navigate complexity, build alignment across stakeholders, and reduce duplication by offering a shared structure for planning and decision-making. There is no prescribed starting point. Start where you are at.

By providing shared stages, prompts, and definitions, the Framework enables greater visibility and coordination between funders, delivery partners, researchers, and communities. This can reduce duplication by helping those involved see where efforts overlap, identify gaps, and better sequence their contributions.

It doesn't aim to replace existing tools or models. Instead, it integrates what's most useful into a coherent reference point that can guide the design, delivery, or improvement of initiatives aiming for real-world change. While many users may choose to begin at the early stages of exploration and design, the Framework is flexible; entry points can vary depending on context, maturity, or need.

It supports decisions that are **relevant, timely, and better matched to context;** not just theoretically sound.

## Who this Framework is for

This Framework is designed for **anyone working to improve uptake and impact in agriculture** whether you're:

**Leading a small, communitybased initiative**

**Delivering a regional extension program**

**Investing in research**

**Advising producers**

**Developing national policy or funding settings**

You might be a researcher, program designer, advisor, grassroots facilitator, investor, or policy maker.

The Pathways to Impact Framework is for those who want to move from good ideas to meaningful, measurable impact.

## Foundations of the Framework

The Framework draws from well-established disciplines that support real-world change, including:

**Behavioural  
science**

**Implementation  
science**

**User-centred  
design**

**Systems  
thinking**

It also aligns with familiar extension, adoption, collaboration and co-design approaches used across Australian agriculture. While the Framework avoids unnecessary academic complexity, it is built on evidence-informed thinking; so, you can use it with confidence in diverse, real-world settings.

Designing for impact doesn't mean you need to be an expert in every discipline. Many projects benefit from specialist input at different points such as behavioral science to understand decision-making, monitoring and evaluation (MEL) to track change, extension expertise to support adoption, or adult learning to make learning and training effective. Knowing when to seek advice and who to involve can save time, avoid missteps, and strengthen outcomes. This Framework encourages users to consider the expertise needed at each stage to build stronger, more collaborative, and more impactful projects.

## How to use the Framework

The Pathways to Impact Framework is organised into **seven flexible stages** that help map the journey from idea to implementation. You don't need to start at SPARK. You might enter at any point; depending on your role, timing, or the problem at hand and move between stages as needed.

In some cases, only one or two stages may be relevant. For example, you might focus on improving delivery, strengthening evaluation, or preparing for SUSTAIN That's fine. **Adapt it to your purpose.**

Each stage includes questions and prompts designed to provoke thinking, spark conversations, and strengthen design. These are not checklists, and you are not expected to answer every question. Use them to reflect, not to constrain.

Skip questions that aren't relevant; but don't avoid those that are challenging. Often, it's the hard questions that reveal blind spots, assumptions, or missed opportunities.

The Framework also recognises the growing role of digital innovation and artificial intelligence (AI) in extension and adoption. While human relationships, trust, and context remain central, new tools are emerging that can support personalised engagement, system monitoring, and adaptive delivery at scale.

Each stage includes a link to the Pathways to Impact Resources Toolbox, which has additional content and information to allow you to work through the Framework. **Use what fits best for your project and context.**



## Note on funding & investment

In today's environment, funding and investment can occur at different stages of the journey; sometimes before detailed design, sometimes mid-stream, or as part of scaling and expansion. This Framework is agnostic about when funding happens. Instead, it focuses on helping you develop well-informed, impact-ready projects no matter when investment decisions are made.

By working through the stages of EXPLORE, DESIGN and PREPARE, you'll strengthen the evidence, logic, and alignment behind your initiative, building confidence for both delivery partners and funders. Whether you're seeking resources up front or demonstrating readiness later, the Framework helps ensure your plans are clear, credible, and grounded in what works.

## Note for researchers

Researchers may use this Framework to better understand how their work connects to end-users, advisors, or delivery systems. While not every research project requires direct engagement with end-users, planning for relevance, usability, and potential application can increase downstream impact.

Where feasible, consider partnering with those closer to delivery or those who represent the target audience. Early collaboration can improve research design, surface assumptions, and unlock new pathways to uptake.

By stepping into this space, researchers can play a powerful role in shaping not just new knowledge, but its usefulness and uptake in practice.



## Key terms used throughout

To keep the Framework accessible across contexts, a few key terms are used consistently:

### **Impact:**

The meaningful and measurable difference an initiative makes on farms, in communities, or across systems. It includes both short and long-term outcomes beyond outputs or activity.

### **Initiatives:**

A flexible term describing any action, project, strategy, or program aimed at supporting change. It may be formal or informal, large-scale or grassroots.

### **MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning):**

Any form of measurement, reflection, or learning. Includes logic models, theories of change, impact frameworks, or feedback loops, both formal and informal.

### **Practices:**

Includes not only technical methods, but also behaviours, tools, decision-making approaches, and social or collaborative norms

### **Target audience:**

The primary people or groups the initiative is intended to support or influence. This could include end-users, producers, advisors, community members, or decision-makers.

### **Solution:**

A solution is any approach, strategy, tool, service, or intervention designed to address a problem or opportunity. In this Framework, a solution may be technical (e.g., a new practice, product, or technology), behavioural (e.g., changes in decision-making, habits, or social norms), or structural (e.g., policy shifts, system redesigns, or new ways of working).

## Guiding Principles

Use the Pathways to Impact Framework with the following principles in mind:

### Stay contextual and flexible

- Adapt to context – Tailor your approach to the scale, complexity, and purpose of the initiative
- Start where it makes sense – You don't need to begin at SPARK
- Plan to learn – Embed reflection and continuous improvement at every stage

### Engage meaningfully

- Engage early and often – Involve stakeholders from the outset
- Design with, not for – Foster collaboration or co-design and shared ownership maintaining flexibility in design and approach
- Include diverse voices – Involve First Nations, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (CALD), and underrepresented groups

### Keep it practical and relevant

- Focus on the real world – Stay grounded in farming realities
- Build on what's working – Leverage trusted people, networks, and approaches
- Embed adult learning – Make learning relevant, respectful, and action-oriented
- Embrace useful tools – Use digital technologies, including AI, where they can add value to engagement, tailoring, delivery, or feedback; while ensuring accessibility, transparency, and user trust

### Support behavioural and systemic change

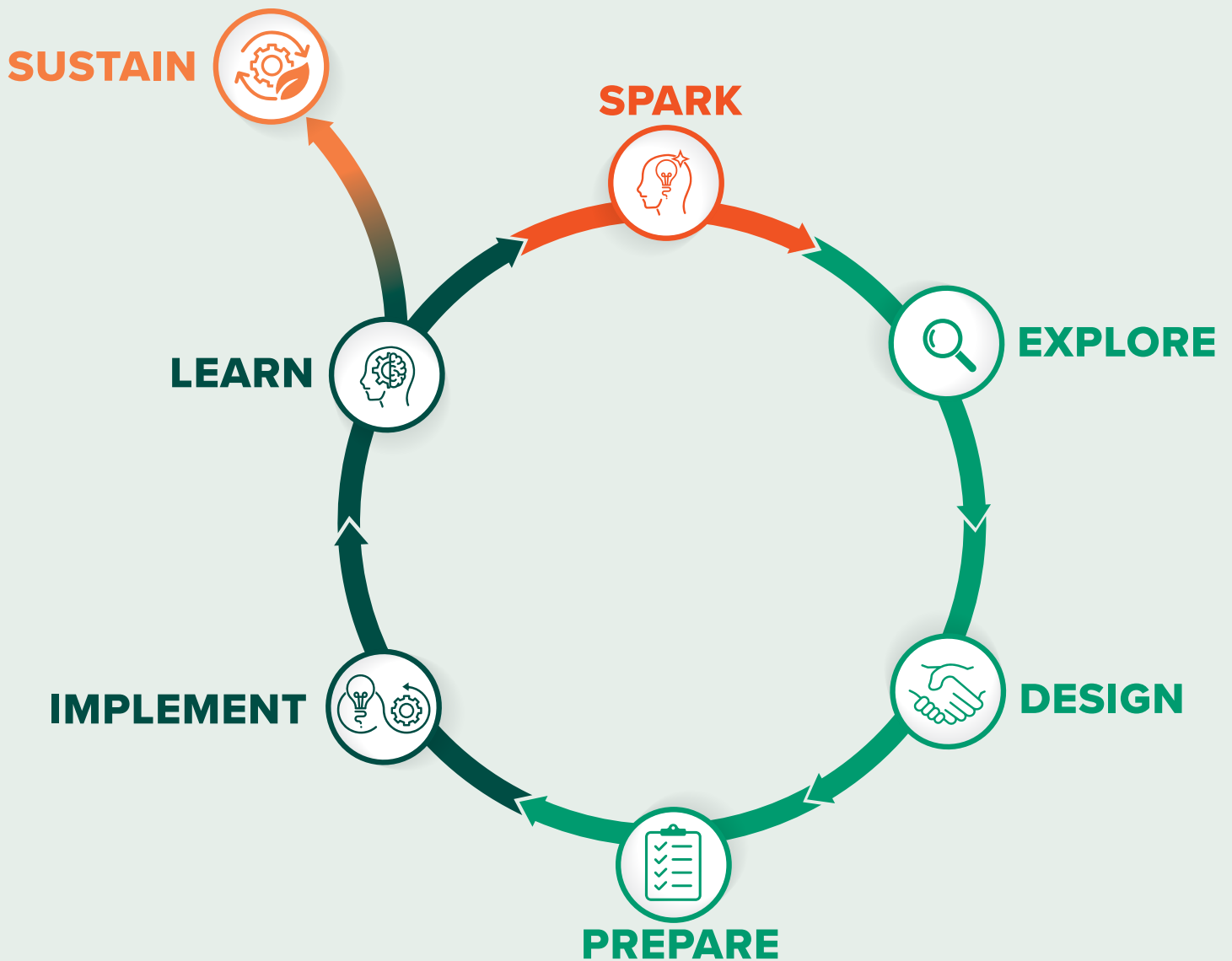
- Draw on behavioural insights – Understand drivers of motivation, habits, and decision-making
- Design change to be easy, attractive, social, and timely. Make it simple to try, motivating to take action, supported by peers, and well-timed for adoption
- Understand the bigger picture – Consider how your initiative interacts with broader systems

### Act with integrity and purpose

- Be clear about intent and influence – Say why you're involved, what's open to co-design, and who benefits.
- Acknowledge power dynamics – Share decision-making and create space for underrepresented voices.
- Focus on impact, not activity – Track what actually changes, not just what gets done.



# Pathways to Impact Framework



**Additional resources and  
useful information**



## Summary of the stages

|                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <p><b>SPARK</b></p>       | <p><b>Every initiative starts with a spark such as an idea, an insight, a problem, or an opportunity.</b> It could come from farmers, researchers, communities, or industry. It may involve an innovation, a novel application of existing knowledge, or introducing something to a new audience. This is the moment to capture potential and ask: What could we do here?</p>                                                                                                                                                   |
|  <p><b>EXPLORE</b></p>     | <p><b>Before moving to action, take time to explore.</b></p> <p>Engage with others to test if the idea meets a genuine need or solves a real problem. Look at the available evidence or lived experience, clarify whether there is a strong enough case to proceed and consider what stakeholders you will engage with.</p> <p>This stage ensures time, effort, and resources are well directed.</p>                                                                                                                            |
|  <p><b>DESIGN</b></p>      | <p><b>Bring the right people together to shape the work.</b></p> <p>Design is about co-creating the solution with the people who matter; those who will use, deliver, and/or be affected by it. Use participatory methods to clearly define the problem and goals, understand your target audience, identify barriers and enablers, and design strategies that are fit for purpose and allow the time for this to be undertaken well.</p> <p>This creates shared ownership, relevance, and stronger foundations for impact.</p> |
|  <p><b>PREPARE</b></p>   | <p><b>Turn strategy into action with a clear, structured plan.</b></p> <p>This is where ideas become deliverable. You'll build out your Theory of Change or Logic Model, design implementation plans, develop budgets and MEL approaches, and test your assumptions. A strong preparation phase builds clarity, confidence, and alignment; setting you up for successful, adaptive delivery.</p>                                                                                                                                |
|  <p><b>IMPLEMENT</b></p> | <p><b>Now it's time to act.</b></p> <p>Deliver your initiative in a way that stays focused on your target audience. Use high-quality research, development and extension practices, adult learning principles, and tailored engagement strategies to meet people where they are.</p> <p>Implementation should be structured but not rigid so stay responsive, adapt to real-time feedback, and support action through relevance and relationship.</p>                                                                           |
|  <p><b>LEARN</b></p>     | <p><b>Learning is not a final step; it's a continuous loop that runs throughout all stages.</b></p> <p>Use formal and informal feedback, reflection, and evaluation to spot what's working, what's not, and what needs to shift. Be curious, responsive, and open to course correction. Share learnings with others, adapt in real time, and use what you discover to shape future decisions and action.</p>                                                                                                                    |
|  <p><b>SUSTAIN</b></p>   | <p><b>SUSTAIN asks how this will endure and evolve over time.</b> It's about embedding change, enabling others to carry it forward, or building it into systems.</p> <p>This stage focuses on what sticks, under what conditions, and how structures like markets, policies or norms support or undermine long-term relevance, application and impact.</p>                                                                                                                                                                      |



## Overview

Every initiative begins with a spark. This may be a problem, an idea, insight, or observation that signals potential. It might emerge from a challenge, a research question, a lived experience, or a conversation. Sparks can come from anyone: producers, researchers, advisors, community groups, policy makers, or funders.

The spark could be:

- A farmer or researcher identifying a new opportunity for system improvement
- A grassroots group responding to an emerging regional issue or problem
- A program team reflecting on evaluation insights and seeing a better way forward

There are no fixed rules for what a spark should look like or where it should come from. What matters is recognising potential, staying curious, and inviting others in early; especially those who bring different perspectives or who will ultimately be affected by the idea.

## Guiding principles

- **Make space for diverse ideas** – Sparks can come from anywhere.
- **Stay open-minded** – This is a time for curiosity, not judgment.
- **Capture, don't commit** – Record the idea without rushing to define the solution.
- **Think big, ground it later** – Be bold in vision, but keep real-world users in view.
- **Expect evolution** – Good ideas often change shape through exploration and feedback.



### Key tasks/outputs at this stage

- ✓ Capture the SPARK in a short, simple format
- ✓ Articulate why the idea matters and what it could lead to
- ✓ Identify who else might benefit from or contribute to it
- ✓ Start assessing whether it's worth investing time and energy to explore further and whether the timing aligns with your operating environment, governance, or potential funding opportunities

## Questions

| Sub-stage     | To be considered                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Spark an idea | <p>Q. What is the core idea or insight?</p> <p>Q. What prompted it? Was it evidence, experience, observation, or conversation?</p> <p>Q. Who else should be involved in exploring this?</p> <p>Q. What's the long-term opportunity if this is the right idea?</p> <p>Q. Who might eventually use, benefit from, or resist this idea and how could you learn from them now?</p> |





# SPARK

## Decision points

- Is this idea meaningful enough to explore further right now?
- Do you have enough curiosity or support to take a first step?
- Is there early interest or alignment and is the timing right?



## Checkpoint

Have you shared your idea with at least one potential end user, partner or stakeholder to see if it resonates beyond your perspective?

Why: Early validation ensures relevance and can save time, energy, and resources later.

### *A note on transitions:*

Stages in this framework are not rigid or discrete. There's often overlap between them. The SPARK and EXPLORE stages may naturally blur together. SPARK is about capturing and expressing an idea. EXPLORE is where you pause to test if that idea is truly worth pursuing.

It's okay if these stages happen in a single conversation or stretch across weeks. What matters is being conscious of the shift from inspiration to investigation, from curiosity to clarity. EXPLORE helps you pause, test your assumptions, and decide whether the spark has the potential to create meaningful impact.



**Find useful resources**  
for completing this stage in the  
**Pathways to Impact Toolbox**



# EXPLORE

## Overview

If your idea shows early promise, it's time to pause and take a closer look. This stage is about testing assumptions, checking for alignment, and understanding the broader context. Ask: "Is this the right thing to do and is now the right time?". By doing so, you can avoid investing in ideas that duplicate existing efforts, fail to meet real needs, or lack the right enabling conditions for success.

In the EXPLORE stage, you'll explore whether the idea meets a real need, whether similar efforts already exist, and how broader system dynamics (e.g., policies, relationships, incentives) might shape success. You'll also start identifying who should be involved, what evidence supports the idea, and whether you're the right person or organisation to lead it.

Help determine the nature of the problem and guide whether structured planning, expert analysis, or experimentation is most appropriate, ensuring the idea is approached in a way that fits its complexity.

This stage can be done solo or in collaboration. Early engagement with end users, potential partners, or system influencers can help validate, refine, or redirect the idea before moving forward.

## Guiding principles

- **Be curious, not committed** – Test ideas before locking them in.
- **Start with the end user** – Understand the need from their perspective.
- **Look around and behind** – Learn from existing work or past efforts.
- **Make uncertainty visible** – Clarify what you know, what you don't, and what you've assumed to reduce blind spots and focus your effort.
- **Check your role** – You may not be the right person to lead this.
- **Seek diverse input** – Broaden your lens and challenge assumptions.
- **Adapt to the challenge** – Tailor your approach to the scale, urgency, and complexity.

## Pause before you proceed.

Not every idea needs action. Use this stage to test: Is this solving a real problem, for real people, at the right time?

If it's a clear problem with known solutions, you can plan accordingly. If it's complex or uncertain, you may need deeper exploration, collaboration, or experimentation.

**Don't skip the test – it saves time, money, and missed opportunities.**



### Key tasks/outputs at this stage

- ☒ Scan for similar initiatives, research, or strategies
- ☒ Clarify the problem, purpose and potential impact
- ☒ Identify target users, key stakeholders, and potential collaborators
- ☒ Understand relevant systems level, or end user/target audience enablers or constraints
- ☒ Decide whether to proceed, refine, or hand over the idea

## Questions

| Sub-stage                       | To be considered                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Assess the fit                  | <p>Q. What is the problem being addressed, and does it address a root cause or just a symptom?</p> <p>Q. Who is the end user, and how do you know this meets their needs?</p> <p>Q. Have you considered different types of credible evidence such as published research, evaluations, farmer knowledge, and lived experience, to test this idea from multiple angles? <sup>1</sup></p> <p>Q. Has this (or something similar) been tried before?</p> <p>Q. What other programs, strategies or services are addressing or influencing this issue; especially for your target audience?</p> <p>Q. Are you duplicating or complementing existing programs, strategies or services?</p> <p>Q. Are there broader policy, funding, or market settings that could support or undermine this idea?</p> <p>Q. Are you the best person or organisation to lead this?</p> |
| Define the 'idea'               | <p>Q. Why does this idea matter?</p> <p>Q. Who needs to do something differently?</p> <p>Q. What kind of change is needed - mindset, behaviour, practice, or system?</p> <p>Q. What types of barriers or constraints will need to be considered?</p> <p>Q. What does success look like?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Digital & user experience needs | <p>Q. If your idea involves digital tools, platforms, or interfaces, have you considered potential user experience (UX) requirements including accessibility, usability, compatibility with existing systems, and integration with users' workflows?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Identify who to involve         | <p>Q. Who needs to be consulted, engaged, or involved now?</p> <p>Q. Will you consult, collaborate, or co-design and with whom?</p> <p>Q. Have you considered diverse voices (e.g., First Nations, culturally and linguistically diverse, age, gender, enterprise scale, etc)?</p> <p>Q. Are there internal stakeholders who need to be looped in early?</p> <p>Q. Have you identified and considered activating key individuals (e.g., local champions, trusted advisors, industry influencers) who can support awareness, validation, and early adoption?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

## Knowns, unknowns, and unknown unknowns

Before moving forward, it's useful to step back and reflect:

- What do we know for sure? (e.g., facts, confirmed data, shared experiences)
- What do we know we don't know? (e.g., missing data, unresolved questions, unclear user needs)
- What might we not even realise we don't know? (e.g., hidden dynamics, future disruptions, blind spots)

Thinking through all three helps uncover assumptions, reduce risk, and prepare for complexity or uncertainty later on.

A useful resource to support this process is the Uncertainty Project Rumsfeld Matrix <https://www.theuncertaintyproject.org/tools/rumsfeld-matrix>

## Decision points

- Does the idea have enough evidence, relevance, and potential to move forward?
- Do you have a well-defined problem statement that clearly articulates a real need, not just a good idea?
- Is now the right time and are you the right person or team?
- Have you refined the idea enough to progress confidently, or do you need to revisit assumptions before moving to DESIGN?



### Checkpoint

Have you tested whether the idea aligns with a genuine user need and considered system-level factors (e.g., policies, norms, incentives) that could support or hinder success?

Why: This helps avoid duplication and ensures you understand the context beyond individual behaviour.



<sup>1</sup> Credible evidence can take many forms, including peer-reviewed literature, field trials, program evaluations, and experiential knowledge from trusted practitioners or communities. What matters is being clear about where the evidence comes from, why it's considered trustworthy, and how it applies to the problem or opportunity being addressed.



# DESIGN

## Overview

Design is where early ideas evolve into clear, considered strategies. It's a collaborative phase focused on building shared understanding of the problem, the people involved, and the system in which you're operating. This is where you bring others together to design for impact.

Design isn't just about ideas on paper; it sets up real-world delivery. Involve those responsible for implementing early to ensure your strategies are realistic, scalable, and supported

## This stage involves

- Defining the problem with enough clarity to guide action
- Engaging users, partners, and stakeholders to shape the direction
- Identifying barriers, enablers, and system-level dynamics
- Selecting strategies that are well-matched to the context, needs, and audience

Strong design is grounded in relevance and flexibility. It creates early alignment, reduces risk, and builds the foundation for practical, scalable, and lasting impact.

By the end of this stage, you'll have a clear problem definition, co-designed strategies, and a shared understanding of success, ready to move into planning and delivery.

## Guiding principles

- **Design with, not for** – Design with others wherever possible; not on their behalf.
- **Start from shared clarity** – Align on the problem, context, and purpose.
- **Think in systems** – Consider how technical, social, economic and policy factors interact to drive, or block change.
- **Build on what works** – Leverage trusted people, lessons, and platforms.
- **Plan for adaptation** – Keep flexibility for changing conditions.
- **Take time to do it well** – Invest upfront to avoid missteps later.

### Tip : Needs vs wants vs solutions

People may express wants ("I want an app") or jump to solutions ("We need workshops"). But these may not reflect the real underlying need ("I need timely, trusted information in a format that suits me") or align well with the problem.

Good design uncovers what will help people take action. Not just what they say they want.



### Key tasks/outputs at this stage

- ✓ A clear, validated problem statement shaped with stakeholders
- ✓ Captured insights into barriers, enablers, and relevant system dynamics
- ✓ Select strategies that are backed by evidence and adapted to suit your audience's situation
- ✓ Identified risks, assumptions, and possible adaptation points
- ✓ A shared, practical view of what success looks like





# DESIGN

## Questions

| Sub-stage                        | To be considered                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Engage stakeholders              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Q. What level of engagement will you use e.g., informing, consulting, collaborating, or co-designing?</li><li>Q. Do you have the skills for inclusive engagement? If not, who can support you?</li><li>Q. Is your approach appropriate for First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities?</li><li>Q. Have you considered factors that influence participation (e.g., age, gender, access, location)? Are there multiple pathways and opportunities for participation?</li><li>Q. Are you engaging with those who may deliver the initiative in the design?</li></ul>                    |
| Define the problem               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Q. Does the problem definition reflect lived experience and stakeholder input?</li><li>Q. Can you describe it clearly enough to guide design?</li><li>Q. What is the scale and impact of the problem?</li><li>Q. What assumptions need to be tested or reframed?</li><li>Q. Who should be re-engaged to ensure you're solving the right problem?</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Understand barriers and enablers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Q. What could prevent or support uptake and engagement?</li><li>Q. Are there social, economic, cultural, environmental, or behavioural factors at play?</li><li>Q. Could frameworks like COM-B or Theoretical Domains Framework (TDF) help you structure your thinking?</li><li>Q. Are there trusted relationships, networks, or systems to build on?</li><li>Q. Have you engaged stakeholders to understand what learning approaches and design features work best for them?</li><li>Q. Have you engaged stakeholders who may be delivering this initiative to understand their enablers and constraints?</li></ul> |
| Explore the system               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Q. What system-level barriers (e.g., policy, incentives, norms) might affect success?</li><li>Q. Could this initiative shift the enabling environment for broader impact?</li><li>Q. What are the possible indicators of success?</li><li>Q. Have you tested with stakeholders if the action, or change required is simple or complex, strategic or tactical?</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Match strategies to needs        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Q. What strategies fit the context and audience?</li><li>Q. Are they practical, relevant, and able to adapt to changing conditions?</li><li>Q. If extension is part of your strategy, have you assessed whether your team, or partners, have the right skills and capacity to deliver it successfully?</li><li>Q. Explore opportunities to integrate digital tools or Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions that support delivery, decision-making, or personalisation at scale.</li></ul>                                                                                                                          |



# DESIGN

## What is a systems map?

A systems map is a visual tool that shows how different people, processes, and factors in a system are connected. It helps you understand what's influencing the issue, where change might have the most impact, and how things like policies, behaviours, or relationships interact. You don't need to capture everything — just enough to reveal patterns, gaps, and opportunities for action.

**Tip :** *Design with delivery in mind*

Refer to the IMPLEMENT stage early. It will help ensure your design is practical, user-focused and ready for real-world delivery.

## Decision points

- Is the problem well-defined, with shared understanding among those involved?
- Are the barriers and enablers clear and evidence-informed?
- Do your strategies align with your intended impact?
- Do you have stakeholder support and buy-in?



## Checkpoint

Have you clearly defined the problem, mapped the system it sits within, and validated that your strategy addresses both individual and system-level barriers? Do you have stakeholder support and buy-in?

Why: This ensures your design is grounded in context; not just theory and is supported by the people it is intended to assist.



**Find useful resources**  
for completing this stage in the  
**Pathways to Impact Toolbox**



# PREPARE

## Overview

This is where strategy becomes action. In the PREPARE stage you bring together all prior thinking into a clear, structured plan; ready for delivery or in some cases, to seek investment.

You'll define how your initiative will lead to impact, test your assumptions, and prepare for implementation. This includes finalising your Theory of Change or Logic Model, building a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan, identifying delivery partners, and ensuring you have the resources, governance and sequencing in place.

You'll also explore how your initiative may influence system-level change such as policies, norms, incentives, or service models.

A well-prepared plan builds confidence, strengthens alignment, and improves the chance of real and lasting impact.

## Guiding principles

- **Begin with the end in mind** – Keep your intended impact front and centre as you finalise your plans.
- **Make the logic visible** – Clearly link your actions, outputs, and outcomes through a tested Logic Model or Theory of Change.
- **Be realistic and evidence-informed** – Base your plan on what's achievable for your audience and context, using the best available evidence.
- **Plan to learn, not just report** – Design your MEL approach to support reflection and adaptation, not just compliance.
- **Engage others in the plan** – Strengthen your design through testing, feedback, and co-development with users and delivery partners.



### Key tasks/outputs at this stage

- |                                                                                 |                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finalised Problem and Impact Statements     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Plan |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A Theory of Change or Logic Model (or both) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Budget and Resourcing Plan                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Detailed Delivery Plan                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Risk and Change Management Plan                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan    |                                                                                    |

## Questions

| Sub-stage                    | To be considered                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Problem and impact           | <p>Q. Is the problem clearly defined, with stakeholder input reflected and endorsed?</p> <p>Q. Have you clearly defined what success looks like and for whom?</p>                                                                               |
| Strategies and interventions | <p>Q. Are strategies matched to barriers, enablers, and user needs?</p> <p>Q. Have you identified the evidence supporting their likely effectiveness?</p> <p>Q. Have you considered risks or unintended consequences and planned responses?</p> |

| Sub-stage                                 | To be considered                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Theory of Change, or a Logic Model        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q. Is your long-term impact clearly defined and agreed?</li> <li>Q. Have you identified the short, medium, and long-term outcomes needed to achieve it?</li> <li>Q. Do your planned outputs clearly link to these outcomes?</li> <li>Q. Have you identified the inputs (resources, partnerships, systems) needed for effective delivery?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Design your actions                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q. Are the changes you're aiming for simple or complex, strategic or tactical and is your approach aligned accordingly?</li> <li>Q. Are your strategies E.A.S.T. (Easy, Attractive, Social, Timely) where relevant?</li> <li>Q. Does your design reflect adult learning principles and what your users need?</li> <li>Q. Have you tested assumptions, and will your outputs realistically drive your intended outcomes, or are there gaps to address?</li> <li>Q. If relevant, have you conducted market testing (e.g., for technologies or tools)?</li> <li>Q. Have you identified the skills and expertise needed to deliver successfully? Such as extension, MEL, or facilitation.</li> </ul> |
| Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q. How will you measure success? What lead and lag indicators and KPIs will you use?</li> <li>Q. Who are you reporting to, and what matters most to them?</li> <li>Q. What data will you collect (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed), and how will you capture it?</li> <li>Q. What constraints could affect MEL data collection, and how will you address them?</li> <li>Q. What tools, systems, or skills are needed to deliver your MEL plan?</li> <li>Q. How will learning and adaptation be built in?</li> <li>Q. How will you monitor resistance, dis-adoption, or opportunities for co-innovation?</li> <li>Q. Does your MEL align with your funding bodies requirements?</li> </ul>    |
| Test your design                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q. Have you tested your design with your target audience and delivery partners?</li> <li>Q. What feedback have you received and how have you used it?</li> <li>Q. What might you have missed and how will you address it?</li> <li>Q. What assumptions have you made, and have they been tested?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Delivery plan                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q. Who will lead delivery, and are they ready, capable, and adequately resourced?</li> <li>Q. Who will deliver each component, and do they have what they need?</li> <li>Q. Are KPIs, milestones, and handover points (if relevant) clear?</li> <li>Q. How will you maintain stakeholder engagement during delivery?</li> <li>Q. Will your initiative influence system-level conditions (e.g., policy, markets, service models), and if so, how will this be supported?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                               |



## PREPARE

### Theory of Change vs Logic Model

These two tools are closely related but serve different purposes:

- **Theory of Change** explains how and why change is expected to happen. It maps the big picture – goals, steps, and assumptions – and is useful for complex projects and strategy design.
- **Logic Model** turns that theory into a clear plan. It outlines what you'll do (activities), what you'll produce (outputs), and what you aim to achieve (outcomes). It is ideal for planning, delivery, and evaluation.

You don't always need both. For simpler projects, a Logic Model may be enough. For more complex work, a Theory of Change helps test assumptions and guide strategy, then a Logic Model brings it to life.

### Decision points

- Is your plan clear, practical, and aligned to your intended impact?
- Have you tested and refined your design with users, delivery partners, and key stakeholders?
- Do you have the right people, partnerships, systems, and resources in place to move forward confidently?
- Are your MEL approach, budget, and delivery pathways robust enough to inspire confidence from decision-makers or investors, if needed?

#### Tip :

Test your planning documents with those involved in the DESIGN stage to ensure they reflect the shared vision. Activate key influencers such as local champions or trusted advisors to build buy-in and momentum early.



### Checkpoint

Is your delivery plan clear, realistic, and ready to implement and does it include the resources, governance, and processes needed to adapt and learn as you go?

Why: Even the best plans can fail if they lack flexibility or ignore opportunities to learn and adjust during implementation.



# IMPLEMENT

## Overview

This is where ideas become action. In the IMPLEMENT stage, your initiative is rolled out, strategy is put into practice, and engagement with users begins in earnest.

Implementation is about delivering with intent while remaining responsive to feedback. You'll activate your plan, mobilise your team, monitor progress, and adapt to what you learn along the way. Communication, learning, governance, and relevance are your compass points.

## Guiding principles:

- **Stay user-focused** – Keep the needs, context, and experience of your audience at the centre of delivery.
- **Balance structure, risk, and flexibility** – Follow your plan but expect change. Monitor emerging risks and adapt quickly when needed.
- **Communicate clearly and often** – Keep stakeholders engaged and informed as things progress and evolve.
- **Make learning practical** – Use adult learning principles to ensure delivery is relevant, timely, and actionable.
- **Meet people where they are** – Match your approach to your audience's knowledge, readiness, and preferences.
- **Use feedback to improve** – Treat feedback as insight and adapt in real time.
- **Deliver with accountability** – Be clear on roles, monitor governance, and track progress transparently.
- **Leverage digital tools where valuable** – Use AI and other technologies to enhance delivery while ensuring accessibility and trust.



### Key tasks/outputs at this stage

- ✓ Get your team ready and start delivery
- ✓ Activate stakeholder engagement and communication channels
- ✓ Deliver the plan with flexibility and feedback loops
- ✓ Collect baseline and real-time monitoring data
- ✓ Tailor delivery to the audience (format, timing, language)
- ✓ Apply adult learning principles to all engagement activities
- ✓ Activate trusted intermediaries (e.g., local champions, advisors)
- ✓ Track delivery progress, governance, and required adaptations



# IMPLEMENT

## Questions

| Sub-stage                             | To be considered                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>The team</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q. Do we have the right skills and roles in place to deliver effectively?</li> <li>Q. Are responsibilities and governance arrangements clear?</li> <li>Q. Is staff time allocated appropriately to delivery priorities?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Launch and delivery</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q. Are daily operations actively managed, reviewed, and adapted if conditions change?</li> <li>Q. Have communications been activated and baseline data collection started?</li> <li>Q. Are delivery workflows, processes and check-ins working smoothly?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Supporting change and learning</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q. Is our language clear, relatable, and suited to the audience?</li> <li>Q. Are delivery methods aligned to timing and decision-making cycles?</li> <li>Q. Are we continuing to consider preferences for delivery format (e.g., hands-on, peer-to-peer, digital) to meet current needs?</li> <li>Q. Have we engaged and activated key intermediaries such as local champions, trusted advisors, or networks, to support delivery and uptake?</li> <li>Q. Are sessions practical, relevant, and respectful of participants' existing knowledge?</li> <li>Q. Are we using a variety of engaging formats to suit different learning styles?</li> <li>Q. Are we using Behavioural Insights and User Design (UX) approaches</li> <li>Q. Are we using AI or digital tools where they can add value without creating barriers?</li> <li>Q. Are we providing prompts, cues, or tools that make it easier to take action?</li> <li>Q. Are peer influencers or champions helping reinforce desired behaviours?</li> <li>Q. Is follow-up built into our delivery approach to maintain momentum?</li> </ul> |
| <b>Feedback and iteration</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q. Are we collecting real-time feedback and adapting based on what we learn?</li> <li>Q. Have we tested content or approaches with a small group before wider rollout?</li> <li>Q. Do participants feel safe and comfortable providing honest feedback?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Ongoing monitoring</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q. Are feedback loops embedded into delivery to capture learning early?</li> <li>Q. Are we regularly scanning for emerging risks, barriers, and opportunities and acting on them?</li> <li>Q. Is the initiative still aligned to the desired outcomes and impact, or do we need to adjust?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |



# IMPLEMENT

## Decision points

- Is delivery aligned with your intended outcomes?
- Are roles, governance, and communications functioning well?
- Are you learning and adapting in real time?
- Is it time to shift, scale, or refine any part of the implementation?

### Tip :

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can enhance reach, responsiveness, and personalisation in extension. Consider using AI tools for tailoring information, analysing adoption patterns, or creating digital support tools, provided they are trusted, transparent, and fit for context



## Checkpoint

Ask your audience often: “Is this useful and what would make it easier to act on?”

Why: Real-time user feedback is critical to improving relevance and effectiveness on the ground.



## Overview

Learning isn't what happens at the end; it's what improves delivery as you go. In this LEARN stage, you draw insights from implementation to understand what's working, what isn't, and why.

Evaluation, monitoring, and reflection should be embedded throughout your initiative, not just as reporting requirements. When designed for learning, they support real-time improvement, build trust, demonstrate value, and help shape future work.

Learning also means scanning for the unexpected. Success isn't just about meeting targets; it's also about noticing unintended consequences, unexpected shifts in practice, or signs of system-level change. When new opportunities or emerging impacts arise, adapt and build on them to amplify success.

This stage is about building a culture of curiosity and shared responsibility. It helps you stay adaptive and ensures the initiative continues to deliver relevant, meaningful impact.

## Guiding principles

- **Design for learning from the start** – Build in reflection and feedback early.
- **Measure what matters** – Track insights that guide action, not just compliance.
- **Embed feedback loops** – Make learning part of delivery, not just post-delivery.
- **Let data drive decisions** – Use what you learn to adapt, amplify, or stop.
- **Capture real-world change** – Focus on behaviour and practice shifts.
- **Foster a learning culture** – Encourage team-wide reflection and curiosity.
- **Look for the unexpected** – Scan for unintended or emerging impacts.
- **Share what you learn** – Insights have more value when shared across the system.
- **Own the learnings** – Missteps and challenges are full of valuable lessons.
- **Watch for system-level signals** – Where possible, track broader shifts in norms, policies, or incentives.

### Tip :

Measuring system change isn't always necessary, but when feasible, it offers powerful insight into whether your initiative is shifting the conditions that support long-term impact.



## Key tasks/outputs at this stage

- ☒ Monitoring and evaluation activities activated
- ☒ Insights gathered and used to improve delivery
- ☒ Adaptations documented and shared
- ☒ Feedback integrated into planning and decision-making
- ☒ Lessons captured for future investment, design, or policy
- ☒ Evidence of system-level effects (where relevant)

## Questions

| Sub-stage                     | To be considered                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Monitoring</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q. Is your monitoring plan active and understood by the team?</li> <li>Q. Is the team engaged with the plan and using it to guide delivery?</li> <li>Q. Are you tracking both outputs (what's delivered) and outcomes (what's changing)?</li> <li>Q. Is your monitoring engaging and meaningful for participants?</li> <li>Q. Are you using digital tools or AI to help monitor, evaluate, or detect patterns over time?</li> <li>Q. Are you responding to the feedback you are collecting?</li> </ul> |
| <b>Evaluation</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q. Are you evaluating at key milestones, or on completion?</li> <li>Q. Are you assessing against your Theory of Change or Logic Model?</li> <li>Q. Is your evaluation intentionally aligned with your engagement and communication strategy?</li> <li>Q. Are you capturing changes to system-level enablers (e.g., policy, norms)?</li> <li>Q. Are you looking for both intended and unintended outcomes?</li> </ul>                                                                                   |
| <b>Continuous improvement</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q. Do you have regular reflection points?</li> <li>Q. Are course corrections being made based on learning?</li> <li>Q. Is the team supported to contribute insights?</li> <li>Q. Are you using these insights to improve future planning or design?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Capture and share</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q. What lessons should be shared internally or externally?</li> <li>Q. Could this learning inform others in the sector?</li> <li>Q. Are there mechanisms to share findings beyond the project team?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

## Decision points

- Are you prioritising learning and improvement as part of delivery?
- Are insights being used to guide real-time changes?
- Do you need to revisit an earlier stage (e.g., EXPLORE or DESIGN)?
- Have you documented changes and captured key lessons?
- Could this learning influence future policy, investment, or system settings?



### Checkpoint

Have you identified at least one meaningful change made during delivery as a direct result of learning or feedback?

Why: Demonstrates adaptive management and reinforces a culture of reflection and responsiveness



## Overview

SUSTAIN is the stage where focus shifts from driving change to ensuring it lasts. It's about embedding what works, supporting others to carry it forward, and creating conditions where the impact continues beyond the life of the initiative.

Unlike earlier stages, SUSTAIN may involve stepping back. Your role may change from implementer to enabler. That might mean creating handover plans, building ownership among users, reinforcing local structures, or integrating change into policies, routines, or norms.

SUSTAIN isn't about control. It's about ensuring change remains useful, usable, and used; even if it evolves. In some cases, the work will continue through a known partner. In others, it will become embedded in systems and relationships without needing a single owner.

This is also a time for ongoing learning: understanding how the change holds, shifts, or fades. Tracking outcomes, dis-adoption, and system influence helps build knowledge for future efforts.

Ultimately, this stage is a bridge; from initiative to legacy, and from short-term action to long-term value.

## Guiding principles

- **Plan for longevity** – Design from the start with sustainability in mind.
- **Let go with purpose** – Enable others to adapt and own the change.
- **Support what comes next** – Share resources, relationships, and legacy tools.
- **Embed into systems** – Policies, routines, and norms are powerful sustainers.
- **Expect evolution** – Long-term change may look different than planned.
- **Track over time** – Monitor whether the change holds, morphs, or fades.
- **Stay curious** – Dis-adoption and adaptation offer valuable insights.
- **Share the value** – Package stories and lessons that inform others.



### Key tasks/outputs at this stage

- ✓ Define your ongoing role (handover, enablement, or embedding)
- ✓ Create a transition plan (if needed) with potential stewards or owners
- ✓ Strengthen enablers (e.g., trusted intermediaries, systems, policies)
- ✓ Develop, promote and share long-term resources (e.g., digital tools, advisory content)
- ✓ Activate long-term monitoring or reflection processes
- ✓ Identify opportunities for scaling, replication, or reinvention
- ✓ Consider AI-powered legacy tools that continue to deliver insights or guidance beyond the life of the initiative.
- ✓ Capture impact stories and lessons for broader influence
- ✓ Track patterns of dis-adoption, reinvention, or adaptation

## Questions

| Sub-stage           | To be considered                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Embed and enable    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q. What is worth sustaining and why?</li> <li>Q. Is the change still fit-for-purpose, or is evolution needed?</li> <li>Q. What supports are required for the change to stick?</li> <li>Q. Is it becoming part of how the system works (policies, norms, decisions)?</li> <li>Q. Who has the trust, legitimacy, and capacity to carry it forward?</li> <li>Q. Is scaling up an option?</li> <li>Q. If required, is there a clear, realistic handover strategy?</li> </ul> |
| Track and learn     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q. How will you monitor long-term outcomes or drift?</li> <li>Q. Are changes being adapted or reinvented in locally meaningful ways?</li> <li>Q. Is the system reinforcing or resisting the change?</li> <li>Q. Are you observing signs of dis-adoption or co-innovation and what do they reveal?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                             |
| Share and influence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q. What stories, insights, or lessons should be shared?</li> <li>Q. Who else might benefit from these insights (e.g., policy, regions, industries)?</li> <li>Q. Can this learning shape future investment or practice?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Manage legacy       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q. What's your plan for keeping important resources relevant and accessible over time?</li> <li>Q. Where will materials be stored so that others can find and use them in future?</li> <li>Q. What mechanisms are in place to capture new insights or feedback over time?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                     |

## Decision points

- Has the change been embedded, enabled, or transitioned for sustainability?
- Have you identified and equipped the people or structures needed to carry it forward?
- Are system-level reinforcers (e.g., policies, roles, incentives) in place or emerging?
- Do you need to secure further support, investment, or adaptation to maintain value?
- Have you captured and shared learning that supports future practice or policy?



### Checkpoint

Is there clear evidence that the change is continuing through routines, policies, relationships, or handover, and being reinforced or adapted by the system or users?

Why: Sustained impact rarely relies on one organisation. This ensures the work lives beyond its origin.

# Definitions

**Adoption:** The process by which individuals or groups begin to use, adapt, or integrate a new idea or practice. In this Framework, adoption means meaningful, sustained uptake that leads to real-world change; not just awareness or one-off trial. It may be partial adoption, or the adaptation of the idea. It also recognises commercialisation as an adoption pathway.

**Adult Learning:** Adult learning recognises that adults are self-directed, learn best when content is relevant and practical, and bring valuable lived experience. Extension based on adult learning principles is respectful, participatory, and focused on real-world application.

**Artificial Intelligence (AI):** AI refers to technologies that enable machines to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence; such as learning, reasoning, pattern recognition, and decision-making. In agricultural extension and adoption, AI can support insights generation, automate routine tasks, tailor information to user needs, and enhance decision-support systems.

**Behaviour:** Behaviour refers to observable actions or choices in response to knowledge, motivations, context, or available support. In this Framework, behaviour includes how people farm, decide, collaborate, communicate, or use resources. Behavioural insights help shape strategies that are timely, relevant, and likely to be adopted.

**Behavioural Science/Insights:** Behavioural insights help us understand what drives people's decisions, actions, and habits. Drawing on psychology, economics, and social science, they reveal what makes change easier or harder and guide the design of strategies that align with how people actually think and behave.

**Co-design:** Co-design is a collaborative approach that involves stakeholders with an interest in the outcome and its creation, from the outset. It emphasises shared ownership, mutual learning, and designing with, not for, others throughout an initiative.

**Collaborating:** Working in partnership with stakeholders across design, delivery, and evaluation. It involves shared responsibility and influence over both actions and outcomes.

**Consulting:** Engagement that invites stakeholder input, via feedback, views, or experiences, to inform decisions. Influence is offered, but decision-making remains with the core team.

**Extension:** Extension is the process of enabling individuals, groups, and communities to apply knowledge, adopt new practices, and create positive, real-world change. It goes beyond the one-way transfer of information to foster learning, collaboration, and behaviour change through trusted relationships, tailored strategies, and ongoing support.

**Impact:** Impact refers to the broader, longer-term effects such as improved productivity, sustainability, or wellbeing, achieved through the outcomes of an initiative.

**Implementation Science:** Implementation science is the study of how to translate ideas, evidence, or innovations into routine practice. It focuses on what helps or hinders uptake in real settings and offers structured approaches to plan, adapt, and embed change.

**Informing:** One-way communication that shares facts, updates, or information. It builds awareness but does not involve stakeholder input into decisions.

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** A KPI is a specific measure used to track progress against your goals. It can be a lead or lag indicator and helps you know whether your actions are working. Good KPIs are relevant, clear, and measurable. Example: "80% of workshop participants adopt a new practice within six months."

**Lag Indicator:** A lag indicator shows whether you've achieved your desired result; but only after the change has happened. These are usually long-term and are influenced by many factors. Example: An increase in farm profitability may be a lag indicator of improved business practices.

**Lead Indicator:** A lead indicator is an early sign that something is heading in the right direction. It helps you track progress before the final outcome is reached. Lead indicators are useful for learning and adapting as you go. Example: If your goal is improved soil health, a lead indicator might be the number of farmers adopting cover crops.

**Logic Model:** A simple visual or written tool that shows how your initiative is expected to work. It links your resources (inputs), activities, and outputs to the short, medium, and long-term outcomes you aim to achieve. Logic Models help teams plan clearly, explain their approach to others, and track progress over time. They're useful for keeping everyone aligned on how your work creates impact.

**Mindset:** A mindset is a set of beliefs, attitudes, values, or assumptions that shape how individuals or groups perceive problems and possibilities. In this Framework, mindset influences how people interpret information, engage with change, and assess risk. Shifting mindsets can be a precondition for deeper change.

**Needs:** The challenges, priorities, constraints, or preferences that must be addressed for an initiative to succeed. Needs may be expressed by end users or identified through assessment, and include capability gaps, context-specific challenges, and enablers to adoption.

**Outcomes:** Outcomes are the specific, measurable changes; such as in knowledge, behaviour, or practice, that result from an initiative and contribute to longer-term impact.

**Practice:** A repeated way of doing something in a particular context. It includes technical methods, behaviours, tools, habits, and social norms. In this Framework, "practice" applies broadly across producers, advisors, researchers, or communities and includes both formal techniques and informal routines. Practice change often requires shifts in motivation, capability, context, or support.

**Solution:** A solution is any approach, strategy, tool, service, or intervention designed to address a problem or opportunity. In this Framework, a solution may be technical (e.g., a new practice, product, or technology), behavioural (e.g., changes in decision-making, habits, or social norms), or structural (e.g., policy shifts, system redesigns, or new ways of working).

**System:** A system is a set of interconnected people, institutions, structures, and relationships that influence how things work and how they change. In this Framework, systems include both formal mechanisms (e.g., RD&E structures, policies, funding) and informal dynamics (e.g., trust, culture, social networks). System-level thinking helps identify root causes, feedback loops, and levers for lasting change.

**Systems Thinking:** Systems thinking considers the broader web of influences; policies, culture, infrastructure, relationships, market forces, shaping individual and collective behaviour. It helps identify leverage points, avoid unintended consequences, and design for sustained change.

**Theory of Change:** A structured explanation of how and why change is expected to happen. It maps the logical steps from activities to impact and highlights assumptions, conditions, and causal pathways along the way.

**User-Centred Design (User Design, UX):** User-centred design puts the people you are designing for at the centre. It involves understanding their needs, preferences, and constraints, and shaping tools, services, or strategies that fit their real-world context.

# Provide feedback

We welcome your feedback on what's working well, what could be improved, or if any links, tools, or resources need updating. Please get in touch to help us keep the Pathways to Impact Framework practical and current.

**Scan to email your feedback to Southern NSW Innovation Hub  
([southernNSWhub@csu.edu.au](mailto:southernNSWhub@csu.edu.au))**



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