

Session: Definitions — outputs, outcomes, impact (Worksheet 1: Slides 1- 7)

HOW TO USE THIS WORKSHEET: TWO PERSPECTIVES, SORT AND CLASSIFY THE IMPACT PATHWAY

You will work with a list of statements.

For each statement, decide:

- **What type of statement it is:**
 - **1 – Activity**
 - **2 – Output**
 - **3 – Short-term outcome**
 - **4 – Long-term outcome**
 - **5 – Impact**
- **Whose perspective it reflects:**
 - **A – Agile response to policy**
 - **R – Research**

👉 **Write your answer as a combination** (e.g. 2A, 3R).

👉 Expect disagreement — that's part of the exercise.

A perspective

You participate in a peatland and integrated land use project requested by a policy team sitting in one of the 4 UK nations. Your role involves enabling and actively shaping the following: co-design, engagement, inclusion of all voices, diverse and equitable participation, evidence translation, synthesis of findings, facilitation, and relationship building.

R perspective

You participate in the same project. Your role involves evidence generation, analysis, synthesis, mapping, indicator development, and scientific interpretation. evidence generation, analysis, synthesis, mapping, indicator development, and scientific interpretation.

STATEMENTS

1. Co-design meetings held with policy teams 2. Stakeholder workshops explore land use trade-offs 3. Evidence needs scoped with government teams 4. Policy briefings produced 5. Rapid evidence request refined 6. Translated summary circulated to policy commissioners 7. Evidence circulated internally within government 8. Briefings referenced in departmental responses 9. Research report improves the usability of evidence 10. Follow-up requests received from policy teams 11. Cross-sector relationships established 12. Researchers and policymakers engage in ongoing dialogue 13. New stakeholders engage with APC processes 14. Evidence reused in internal policy discussions 15. Integrated approaches discussed in planning conversations 16. Cross-sector collaboration continues beyond the project 17. APC approach reused in another policy context 18. Stronger integration of evidence into decision-making 19. Policy teams reference integrated approaches in future work 20. A government department adopts the integrated approach in published guidance 21. Implementation funding allocated to an approach introduced through the project 22. Land use decisions on commissioned topics cite project recommendations 23. Researchers conduct an evidence review	24. Findings discussed with policy stakeholders 25. Researchers develop integrated indicators 26. Mapping tools developed 27. Technical reports completed 28. Scientific evidence synthesised 29. Methodological recommendations published 30. Publication submitted 31. Report downloaded 500 times 32. Improved usability of evidence reported by users 33. Policy teams request clarification and follow-up analysis 34. Scientific recommendations referenced in policy discussions 35. Stakeholders express interest in findings 36. Indicators tested in a related project 37. Research cited in future planning work 38. Monitoring approaches across organisations begin to align 39. Evidence increasingly reused across projects 40. Methods integrated into routine monitoring activity 41. Other UK nations adopt the monitoring approach 42. Land use planning policy revised to require integrated assessment 43. Restored peatland sites show measurable improvements in carbon retention 44. Researchers analyse spatial datasets
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BUILD THE IMPACT PATHWAY

Using your sorted statements, sketch a coherent pathway from activities to outputs to outcomes to impact. Short notes are fine.

1. Activities · Things you did.

A:

R:

2. Outputs · What was produced.

A:

R:

3. Short-term outcomes · Immediate changes in knowledge, understanding, language used and broader awareness or perception of trade-offs

A:

R:

4. Long-term outcomes · Sustained changes in policy, governance, behaviour or partnerships that continue beyond the project.

A:

R:

5. Impact · *The cumulative positive effect of changes achieved across many outcomes. Demands evidence of benefits, or harm avoided*

A:

R:

REFLECT

- Which impact pathways (activities→outputs→outcomes→impact) cause disagreement between A and R perspectives?

- Pull together statements to identify an impact pathway— and what evidence would you need to defend impact?

- Are A and R contributions to impact pathways equally easy to track and evidence — and which are often invisible?

Session: Enabling impact: the hidden work (Slides: 8-16)

HOW TO USE THIS WORKSHEET: FIND THE IMPACT PRINCIPLE THAT IS MISSING

Each scenario looks promising on the surface — strong activities, credible outputs, signs of success. But one or more impact principles may be weak or missing. For each, explore: what appears strong, what might still be missing, which principle(s) are weakest, what risks could emerge later. You may identify more than one. The aim is to use this as a way of understanding the value of the hidden enabling work.

Impact principles

1. Co-design: Fairness and learning in partnership
2. Understanding contexts of evidence use
3. Building and engaging with stakeholder networks
4. Equity, diversity and inclusion
5. Strengthening mutual capacities
6. Embedding impact work into the research process

Scenario 1

A team of policy advisors identify a policy need on integrated peatland restoration and work with APC staff to define the scope and feasibility of a rapid evidence request. Next, a calldown is launched, and following interviews with applicants and scoring of their proposals, the selected research team delivers a high-quality evidence synthesis, spatial analysis and technical recommendations within deadline. Senior policy makers praise the outputs for rigour, clarity and policy relevance. The final report is circulated internally and presented at a cross-government meeting.

The team of policy advisors engage at the kick-off meeting and at the end of the process, and there is limited discussion about how the evidence will be interpreted or applied across different implementation contexts.

Please reflect on what's missing

Scenario 2

A LUNZ Hub APC-commissioned project develops strong working relationships across government, agencies and established stakeholder networks. The project generates follow-up requests, repeat invitations by policy and other stakeholders and continuing collaboration across several projects. Outputs are actively discussed and reused internally.

The same organisations and individuals participate, while some groups engage occasionally or through webinar participation.

Please reflect on what is missing

Scenario 3

A project team adapts quickly to changing policy priorities during delivery of a calldown. Outputs evolve several times in response to emerging policy needs, stakeholder feedback and new opportunities. The project team is praised for responsiveness and flexibility.

The original research questions and underlying evidence framework shifted repeatedly. Some partners reported feeling unclear about the project's direction; others felt their early input was set aside without explanation.

Please reflect on what's missing

Scenario 4 — Capacity assumed, not built

A LUNZ Hub-APC project produces a sophisticated set of integrated indicators and a methodology guide. The outputs are circulated to all four nations' policy teams. Two of the four nations adopt elements of the framework within months.

The other two nations have not engaged further. Informal feedback suggests their teams lack the technical capacity to apply the framework, and no training or follow-up support was built into the project.

Please reflect on what's missing

Synthesis across the four scenarios

- Which principles recurred most often as missing?

- Where in your own work might similar gaps exist?

- Which of these principles is hardest to evidence — even when present?

- What would change in your project planning if one of these principles was made visible from the start?

HOW TO USE THIS WORKSHEET: Find out whether the statement claims contribution or attribution

Below are ten statements describing research and its influence on policy and practice. Some are taken from real REF impact case studies; some are constructed.

For each statement, explore:

(a) Which issue is this statement about? Choose relevant one(s):

- uncertainty
- impact awareness
- evidence use
- attribution vs contribution
- engagement and uptake

(b) In your opinion, is the statement strong (i.e. evidence-based) or weak (i.e. overclaiming instead of evidencing) — and why?

There is no single right answer. Listen for how each version lands, who it might convince, and what it makes possible to defend.

STATEMENTS

1. "Our findings changed policy."

Issue: _____ Strong / Weak: _____

2. "The report contributed to ongoing discussions of integrated land-use trade-offs and helped identify where further evidence is still needed."

Issue: _____ Strong / Weak: _____

3. "The evidence is clear: this is the optimal approach to integrated land-use management."

Issue: _____ Strong / Weak: _____

4. "The RELU-funded research contributed to the announcement of a new catchment management approach by Defra and the Environment Agency."

Issue: _____ Strong / Weak: _____

5. "Our recommendations are being taken up by policy teams across the four nations."

Issue: _____ Strong / Weak: _____

6. "Policy participants described using the findings to inform ongoing discussions about peatland monitoring approaches."

Issue: _____ Strong / Weak: _____

7. "The report was completed on time, disseminated widely, and well received."

Issue: _____ Strong / Weak: _____

8. "The evidence points to several plausible approaches, each shaped by different contexts and trade-offs."

Issue: _____ Strong / Weak: _____

9. "Our work delivered the evidence base for the new land-use policy."

Issue: _____ Strong / Weak: _____

10. "This research has justified significant funding for peatland restoration in intensively managed catchments."

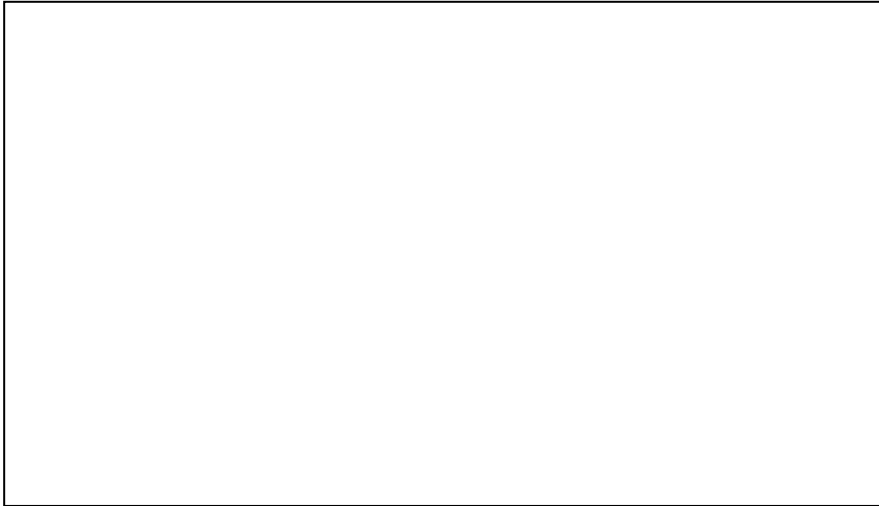
Issue: _____ Strong / Weak: _____

REFLECTION

- Which statements would you be most comfortable defending in writing? Why?

- Which statements would you be most comfortable saying in a meeting? Why are those answers sometimes different?

- Which patterns do you most recognise from your own writing?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a participant to write their response to the question above.

Final reflections:

- Which statement would you defend in writing?
- Which would you say in a meeting?
- Why are those sometimes different?

Session: Frameworks for telling the story of your impact pathway (Slides: 30 – 40)

Choose an idea, event or project (e.g. a calldown) you want write about. Be explicit about what is evidenced and what is anticipated. Honest contribution beats confident attribution.

1. IDENTIFICATION

Topic	
Title	
Project / Funding	
Intended Impact	
Lead institution / PI	
Status (in progress / completed / archived)	
Key dates (started or commissioned, completed)	
Your name	

2. POLICY OR RESEARCH NEED AND CONTEXT

What question was being addressed and why. The policy or research context is part of the impact story — a piece of work commissioned in a decision window lands differently from one commissioned for general reference or as part of blue sky research.

Policy or Research question or need addressed	
Commissioning context (decision window, urgency, prior work, rationale)	
Intended audience(s) for the work	

3. THE WORK

Brief summary. Activities = what was done; Outputs = what was produced. Check Worksheet 1.

Activities (what was done)	
Outputs <i>List each published or planned output. Be specific about confidentiality — it affects what can be cited in synthesis.</i>	
Title	
Type (report / brief / guidance / tool / other)	
Date published	
Audience(s)	
Link / location	
Confidentiality (public / partially confidential / restricted)	

4. OUTCOMES — WHAT CHANGED BECAUSE OF THE WORK

List each observed outcome with the evidence behind it. 'Outcome' = change in someone's knowledge, behaviour, relationships or practice. Keep separate from impact (section 6). Add rows as needed.

Short-term outcomes (immediate changes)

Outcome	Evidence	Date observed	Source / contact

Long-term outcomes (sustained or system-level changes)

Outcome	Evidence	Date observed	Source / contact

5. IMPACT — CHANGE IN THE WORLD

Impact is the THEREFORE: change that has happened (or may yet happen) in the world beyond the project, traceable in part to this work. Distinguish anticipated from evidenced. Most ideas or projects will have more anticipated than evidenced impacts — that is honest, not a weakness.

Theory of Change Impact category

Choose the closest fit: Aligned 4 nation to 7CB; Policies integrated with & reflect market forces & wider goals; Land managers pursue just, holistic & sustainable Net Zero pathways; Early career policy & academic leaders equipped; Valuing land and those who care for it

Anticipated or planned impact (change the work may yet enable) · *What outcomes might develop into impact over time? What signals would tell you it is happening?*

Evidenced impact (change in the world that has happened)

Impact (Planned or serendipitous)	Evidence	Date /How it was observed	Source / contact

6. IMPACT SIGNALS TO WATCH

Signals you expect may emerge over time — follow-up requests, reuse in other contexts, citations, policy decisions, on-the-ground change. Name who holds the evidence so it can be tracked.

Signal to watch	Where / who would notice	Why it matters	Next follow-up

7. CONTRIBUTION CLAIM

Be honest about the boundary of your claim. What did this work contribute, alongside what other inputs? ‘Our work delivered X’ rarely survives scrutiny; ‘Our work was one of several inputs that shaped X’ usually does.

What our work contributed	
What other inputs contributed alongside	
What we can defend/own; what we cannot	

8. NARRATIVE

ABT (And-But-Therefore) template – Fill each box in turn, then read them together as on punchy paragraph

AND <i>Baseline: the context, and what people already accept</i>	BUT <i>The catalyst: the tension or gap. Name it plainly</i>	THEREFORE <i>The response and result, together. What was done and what changed. For challenges remaining unresolved, include lessons learnt</i>

Fuller story (the tracking narrative) · Name the policy need, what was commissioned, what was produced, what came of it, what change it may yet enable. Choose the impact narrative

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Punchy version (2–3 sentences, ABT form recommended) · *AND ... BUT ... THEREFORE.*
Resist the urge to soften.

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