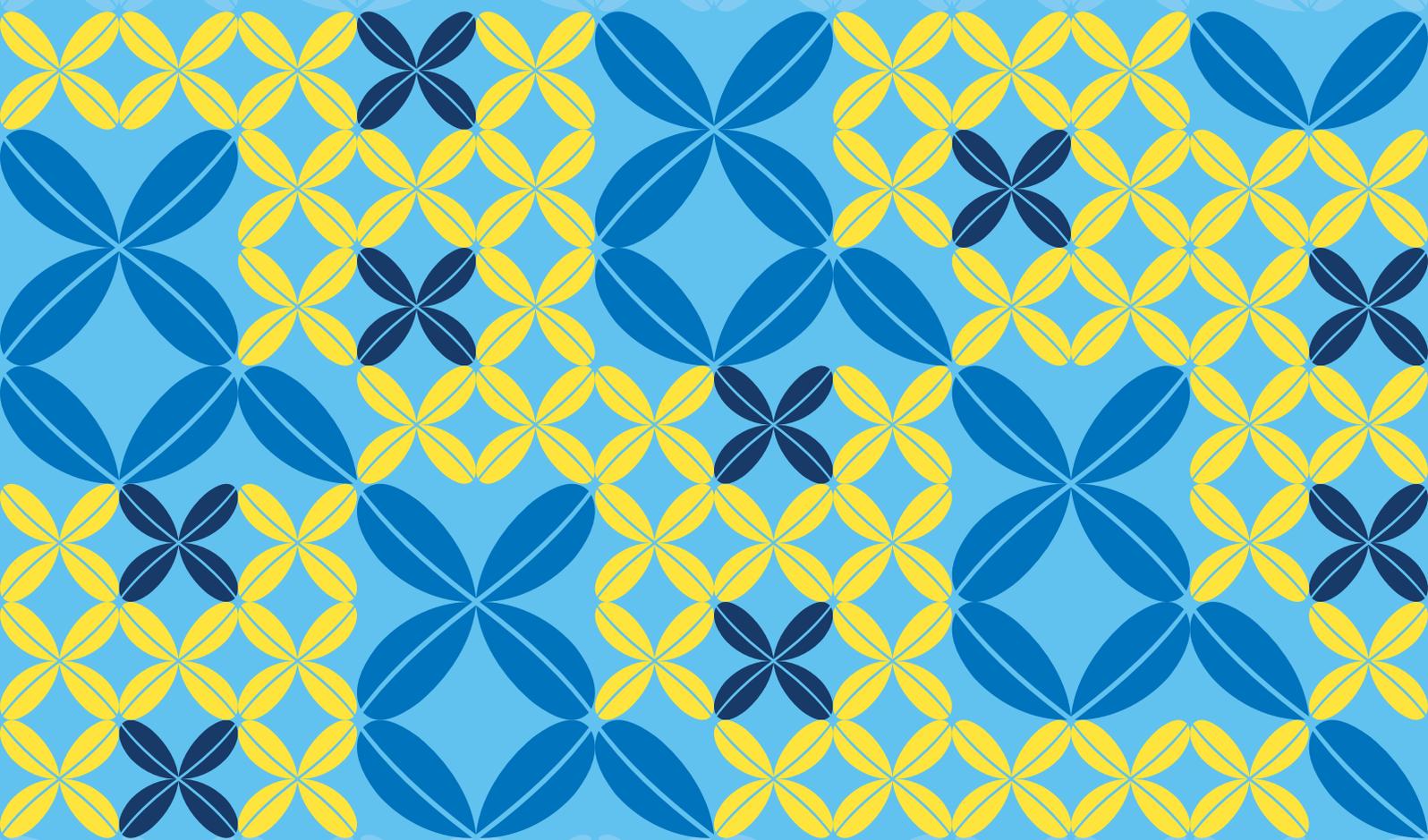


The Pacific Value-for-Investment Model, Principles and Guidelines

Prepared for Auckland Council



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“O le tele o sulu e maua ai le malamalama” – Through the gathering of torches, light is found.

This Samoan proverb reflects the unity and shared effort of many experts, strategic thinkers and leaders that illuminated the path to developing the Pacific Value-for-Investment Model (P-VIM).

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Dr Julian King
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(Economic expert)



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Executive summary

Background

Rationale: Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand are a diverse and growing population whose cultural, social, and economic contributions strengthen the nation’s fabric, despite persistent inequities in health, education, employment, and housing. Their youthful demographic and rising economic influence position them as key drivers of innovation and inclusive growth, making it critical that initiatives to improve Pacific skills, employment, and wellbeing are effectively evaluated. A framework is needed that grounds economic evaluation in Pacific values, strengthens the link between resources and value creation, and guides collective efforts toward investments, evaluation, impacts and outcomes that matter for Pacific communities and the prosperity of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Objectives: In response, Auckland Council’s Economic Development Pacific team, with support from the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), commissioned the development of the Pacific Value-for-Investment Model (P-VIM) to ensure Pacific skills development, employment and wider investments are not only efficient but transformative, capturing economic, social, cultural, and relational impacts that matter for Pacific communities and the nation.

Development: The P-VIM was developed between August and December 2025, informed by a literature scan of diverse Pacific and Western research and evaluation knowledge bases, a Value-for-Investment fono (workshop) to deepen understandings of the Vfi framework and explore synergies with Pacific research methodologies and practice, and interviews and engagements with key Pacific experts and informants (government executives, Pacific NGOs, providers, academics, and consultants). An advisory group with senior public sector cultural and technical experts was established at the outset to inform, review and refine successive iterations of the P-VIM.

Purpose: The P-VIM is the first unified framework to ground economic evaluation in Pacific values and connect resources to value creation in ways that matter for Pacific communities, agencies, and funders – beyond what economic evaluation approaches alone typically capture.

Intended audience: The P-VIM is designed for commissioning agencies, funders, and evaluators seeking a structured, evidence-informed and culturally grounded framework to strengthen commissioning models, service delivery, evaluation, and shared accountability.

The Pacific Value-for-Investment Model

The P-VIM builds on the Value-for-Investment (Vfi)¹ approach to provide agencies and evaluators with context-specific principles and guidelines for ensuring that social and economic investments are not only efficient, but transformative and culturally resonant. It comprises four progressive and interconnected waves of activity – each wave provides structured guidance for implementation:

¹ <https://www.julianking.co.nz/>

- **Wave 1 – Prepare: Teu le vā²** establishes the P-VIM foundation by defining purpose, scope, and partnerships, securing resources, and engaging culturally responsive evaluators to co-create the theory of change, evaluation logic, and framework. Clear objectives and timelines build shared understanding and accountability from the outset.
- **Wave 2 – Design: Vfi** connects the intent of an initiative with culturally grounded measures of value by co-creating the value proposition, criteria, and standards that complement the theory of change, and identifying evidence required that is robust, transparent, and culturally aligned. Wave 2 recognises that economic approaches may contribute to Vfi but are insufficient alone, while the IDI links administrative data across sectors it also presents limitations for Pacific data and must be complemented by culturally responsive qualitative methods to safeguard integrity and use.
- **Wave 3 – Implement: Vfi evaluation** puts plans into action by gathering credible evidence, analysing and interpreting evidence through culturally grounded lenses, triangulating and synthesising findings for depth and credibility, and making transparent evaluative judgements. Wave 3 ensures ethical data collection and analysis, protects Pacific peoples and data sovereignty principles, addresses causality and attribution, and delivers rigorous and credible answers to key Vfi questions.
- **Wave 4 – Inform: Tausi le vā³** completes the P-VIM cycle by translating findings into action through clear reporting and culturally respectful dissemination. It promotes accountability, empowers communities, informs policy and practice, and strengthens relationships to drive meaningful, transformative change.

Together, these waves position the P-VIM as a relational and technical evaluation approach that establishes clear accountabilities and meaningful and reciprocal partnerships among agencies, funders, and providers. It delivers value across diverse sectors by providing a culturally grounded approach to assessing value-for-investment and informing decision-making. By connecting investment and evaluation as two sides of the same process, the P-VIM ensures resources deliver measurable outcomes and true value. Applicable to both individual and cross-agency initiatives, it offers a plausible all-of-government framework for embedding values-based, rigorous principles, shared accountability, and consistent standards across commissioning, service delivery, and evaluation activities.

Grounded in Pacific and Vfi values, the P-VIM upholds guiding principles that protect cultural integrity and ensure methodological rigour. These include cultural scholarship and interdisciplinary thinking; cultural credibility and mixed methods; evaluative reasoning; reflective and responsive practice; participatory approach and meaningful relationships; professional practice; and data stewardship and digital ethics. Adherence to these principles is fundamental to P-VIM engagement, application, and accountability.

² Translation: To nurture the relational space. Meaning: A core Pacific concept that emphasises caring for and maintaining respectful, balanced, and accountable relationships between people, communities, and institutions.

³ Translation: To maintain and progress the relational space. Meaning: safeguarding and nurturing relationships so they continue to grow, adapt.

Table of contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Executive summary	3
1. Background	6
1.1. Rationale	6
1.2. Objectives.....	6
1.3. Developing the Pacific Value-for-Investment Model.....	7
2. The Pacific Value-for-Investment Model	9
2.1. The Collective Pacific Value-for-Investment Model.....	10
3. Guiding principles	12
4. Guidelines for application	15
4.1. Wave 1 – Prepare: Teu le vā	15
4.2. Wave 2 – Design: Vfl.....	18
4.3. Wave 3 – Implement: Vfl evaluation	24
4.4. Wave 4 – Inform: Tausi le vā.....	27
4.5. Guidelines for applying the Collective Pacific Value-for-Investment Model	28
5. Conclusion	31
Appendix 1: Pacific peoples - population and context	34
Pacific peoples - from migration to identity.....	34
A dynamic, youthful, and diverse urban population driving future workforce growth	35
A religious and bilingual population shaping inclusive communities.....	36
Stable families and interconnected households that strengthen social cohesion	36
A population navigating social inequities while continuing to fuel New Zealand’s economy	37
Appendix 2: Literature scan	40
Pacific research methodologies and practice frameworks.....	40
Evaluation best practice frameworks	49
Pacific evaluation and policy frameworks	58
Economic evaluation, Value-for-Investment and Pacific Living Standards frameworks.....	66
Literature scan key learnings to inform the Pacific Value-for-Investment Model	77
Appendix 3: References	81



1. Background

1.1. Rationale

Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand are a diverse and vibrant population, encompassing individuals and inter-generational families with genealogical links to the Pacific Islands such as Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau, and others.

Despite being impacted by persistent social inequities and disproportionately poor outcomes across key sectors, including health, education, employment and housing, Pacific peoples make a rising contribution to New Zealand's economy – bringing cultural diversity, workforce participation, and entrepreneurial growth that strengthen the nation's social and economic fabric (see Appendix 1).

Looking ahead, Pacific people's expanding and youthful demographic and economic influence positions this population as key drivers of innovation, productivity, and inclusive growth for New Zealand's future. Addressing inequities and improving outcomes will only amplify their role and impact.

With numerous initiatives underway to improve Pacific skills, employment, economic and health and wellbeing outcomes, robust evaluation is essential to ensure optimal design, delivery, and impact - particularly in light of evolving economic considerations and value-for-investment contexts.

Economic evaluations such as cost-benefit, cost-effectiveness, and related approaches are designed to relate outcomes to the resources used. They can capture outputs, short-term results, fiscal and economic impacts, and in some cases monetised social and intangible value, but as commonly applied in practice, provide limited insight into relational, cultural and equity dimensions of value. Other conventional evaluations, such as process and outcome evaluations, can offer rich qualitative and quantitative insights into needs, implementation, experiences, and outcomes, but typically pay less systematic attention to the costs of interventions or to how efficiently resources are used.

A Value-for-Investment (Vfi) approach combines the strengths of economic and other evaluative approaches and addresses their gaps by assessing the value of initiatives relative to the resources invested, providing a transparent framework for decision-making and prioritisation of investments that deliver sustained value. A framework is needed that grounds economic evaluation in Pacific values, strengthens the link between resources and value creation, and guides collective efforts toward impacts that matter - not only to Pacific communities but to the wellbeing and prosperity of Aotearoa New Zealand as a whole.

1.2. Objectives

In 2025, the Auckland Council Pacific Economic Development Pacific team, with funding from the MBIE Auckland Skills Shift appropriation, commissioned TIRIA (in partnership with JK & Associates and Sapere Research Group) to develop a Pacific Value-for-Investment model to support Pacific skills development, employment and wider government initiatives to:

1. Define success and value with and for intended Pacific target audiences, inclusive of socio-cultural contexts, relational accountability and long-term intergenerational outcomes.
2. Ground the measurement and monitoring of self-determined indicators of success and value within epistemological Pacific contexts and worldviews (i.e., Pacific ways of knowing and doing).
3. Set up a systematic way of monitoring individual and collective outcomes and impacts across initiatives and agencies.

The P-VIM has been developed to provide agencies and evaluators with context-specific principles and guidelines for ensuring that investments are not only efficient, but transformative and culturally resonant. It amalgamates Pacific research methodologies, practice frameworks, and evaluation best practice with the VfI approach (King, 2019). By grounding the concept, understanding and measurement of value and investment in Pacific knowledge, culture and contexts, the P-VIM ensures investments and initiatives are effective and captures the full spectrum of social, cultural, economic and wellbeing outcomes and impacts.

This report presents the P-VIM, outlining its intended audience, guiding principles, and practical guidelines for implementation. It details how the model can support a more inclusive, credible, and impactful evaluation practice for assessing value-for-investment in ways that are meaningful to Pacific peoples and communities and relevant to commissioning agencies, evaluators and decision-makers.

All background and supporting evidence that informed the development of the P-VIM are provided in the Appendices of this report.

1.3. Developing the Pacific Value-for-Investment Model

The P-VIM was developed through an iterative process aligned with the fa'afaletui methodology (Tamasese et al., 1997) which emphasises the deliberate weaving together of diverse evidence bases and the perspectives of multiple and diverse knowledge holders. This approach enabled systematic development, critical review, and refinement of successive iterations of the P-VIM. It also reflects the principles of methodological triangulation in qualitative research, where multiple methodological practices, perspectives, and observers are integrated within a single study to achieve a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Both fa'afaletui and triangulation share a commitment to epistemological pluralism, underscoring that robust knowledge emerges through the convergence of diverse viewpoints and methodological rigour.

P-VIM advisory group: An advisory group was established at the start of the project to provide strategic advice on the development of the P-VIM and review and refine successive iterations of the model. Membership comprised senior representatives across multiple government agencies, bringing extensive public sector expertise, alongside deep knowledge of Pacific peoples and communities. The group's collective experience spanned research and evaluation, economics, policy design and implementation, and commissioning frameworks, ensuring a robust and multidisciplinary approach to P-VIM development.

Methods informing iteration 1: Evidence-informed P-VIM

- **Literature scan (see appendix 2):** A literature scan was conducted rather than a full systematic review to identify and synthesise key insights and learnings most relevant to developing the first iteration of the P-VIM. This scan drew on national and international sources across multiple knowledge domains, including Pacific research methodologies and practice frameworks, evaluation best-practice frameworks, Pacific-specific evaluation approaches, economic evaluation frameworks, the Pacific Living Standards framework, and Value-for-Investment approach.⁴ The scan encompassed a broad range of sources - including peer-reviewed journal articles, grey literature, theses, books, and unpublished works accessed through professional and personal networks - covering a wide publication timeframe to incorporate both foundational theories and contemporary applications. Databases searched included Scopus and ProQuest complemented by Google Scholar and key government and professional organisation websites. Targeted search terms and reference snowballing techniques were employed to ensure comprehensive coverage.
- **Value-for-Investment fono:** The P-VIM advisory group participated in a Vfl fono on 8th October 2025 hosted by Auckland Council and co-facilitated by Dr Julian King and Dr Lana Perese to deepen understandings of the Vfl model and approach, explore potential synergies with Pacific evaluation and research methodologies and practice, and review the preliminary first iteration of the evidence-informed P-VIM.

Methods informing iteration 2: Advisory-informed P-VIM. Feedback from the Vfl fono and preliminary P-VIM discussions informed the development of iteration 2, which was circulated to advisory members for further review and refinement.

Methods informing iteration 3: Key-Pacific Expert informed P-VIM. Iteration 3 incorporated additional advisory feedback, and was further refined through engagements and interviews with key Pacific experts and informants:

- **Government agency Chief Executives and/or senior managers (5 New Zealand-based and a cohort of 50 based in the Pacific):** To review and refine the P-VIM from agency, commissioning and policy perspectives.
- **Pacific NGOs and providers (9):** To provide insights from national service provider perspectives.
- **Pacific framework developers, academics and research/evaluation consultants (4):** To contribute perspectives from research, analytical, public and private sector domains.

⁴ The literature scan provides a high-level summary of each domain, highlighting key learnings and insights relevant to shaping the P-VIM. For readers seeking deeper engagement, references are provided at the end of the report.

2. The Pacific Value-for-Investment Model

The P-VIM (Figure 1) grounds economic evaluation in Pacific values, strengthens the link between resources and value creation, guides collective efforts toward impacts that matter for Pacific communities, agencies and funders, and ensures that investments are not only efficient, but transformative and culturally resonant. Guided by core principles (see section 3), the P-VIM comprises four progressive waves of activity – 1. Prepare: Teu le vā, 2. Design: Vfi, 3. Implement: Vfi evaluation and 4. Inform: Tausi le vā – each with distinct components (detailed in section 4) that serve as a guide and framework for:

- Funding and commissioning agencies: It clarifies roles, expectations, obligations, and timelines specific to Pacific evaluation and value-for-investment initiatives
- Evaluators: It outlines culturally responsive practices and standards that align with Pacific values, evaluation and value-for-investment practice.

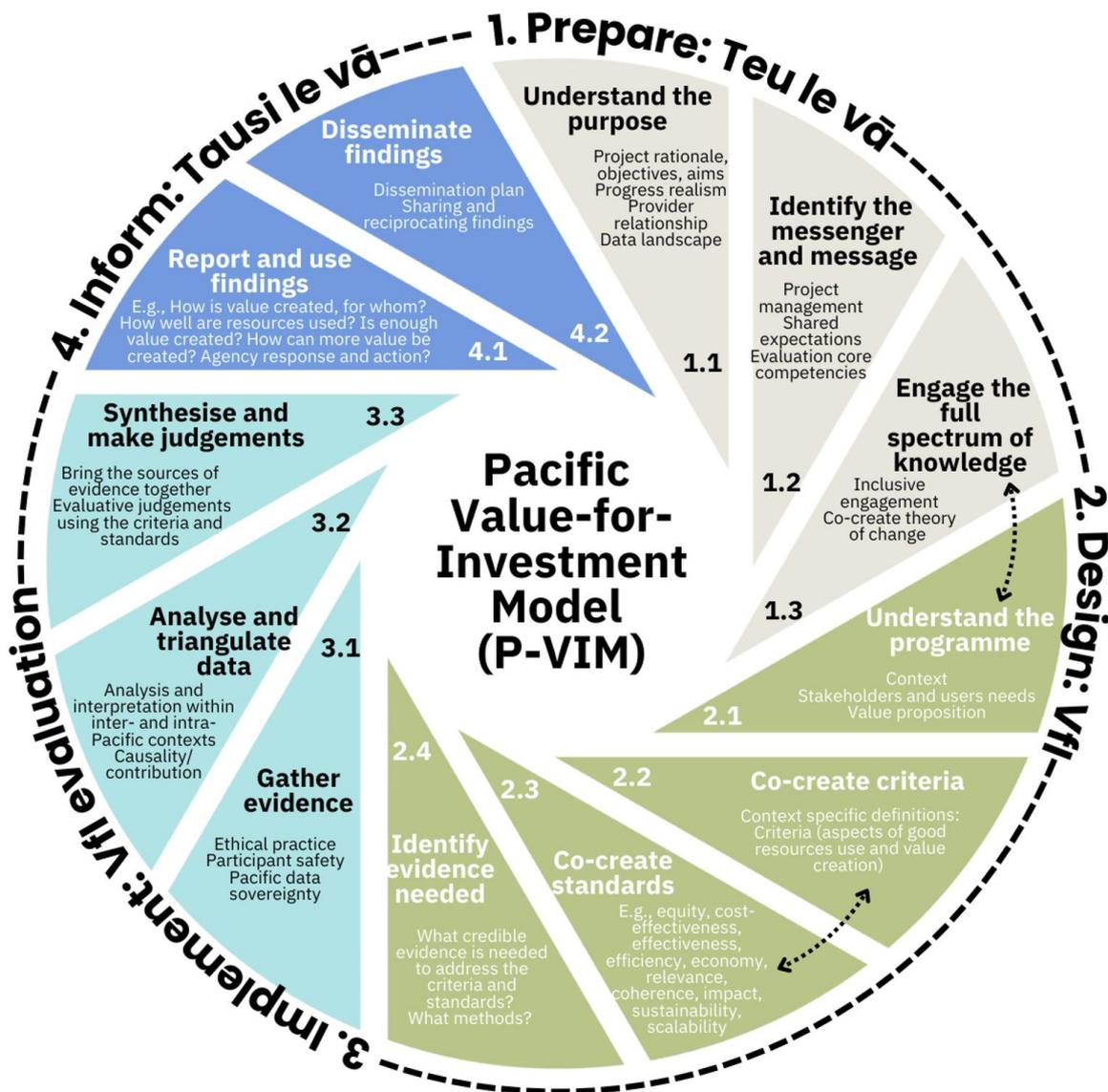


Figure 1: Pacific Value-for-Investment Model

2.1. The Collective Pacific Value-for-Investment Model

The Collective Pacific Value-for-Investment Model (CP-VIM) (**Error! Reference source not found.**) expands on the P-VIM by extending its application from individual initiatives to a collective, system-level approach. Like the Vfl framework,⁵ the P-VIM emphasises defining clear *criteria* (aspects of value) and *standards* (levels of value), that describe what good value looks like, providing a transparent basis for making evidence-informed evaluative judgements. These criteria and standards are context-specific, co-created and tailored to the unique context of each initiative. However, these initiatives often sit within a broader ecosystem of disconnected initiatives or activities intended to achieve similar societal impacts. The CP-VIM addresses this fragmentation by:

- Recognising the ecosystem in which initiatives operate and mapping all pathways to outcomes and value-for-investment
- Capturing the combined contributions of multiple cross-agency initiatives or diverse activities within a single initiative towards shared outcomes and impacts
- Aligning with global best practices from the Collective Impact Approach (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Parkhurstis & Preskill, 2014; Smart, 2017).

The CP-VIM applies and builds on theory of change principles of Stufflebeam & Coryn (2014) by making causal pathways explicit through individual P-VIM logic models, integrating these into a collective framework to show how diverse initiatives contribute to system-level change, and enabling adaptive learning by mapping interdependencies that reveal leverage points for systemic shifts, cross-agency collaboration, and resource optimisation. The CP-VIM also articulates a theory of value creation or value proposition, clarifying how initiatives are expected to convert resources into value that more than justifies their costs, and making explicit that impact and value are related but distinct (King, 2021). Unlike conventional models, the CP-VIM embeds Pacific values and relational principles, ensuring cultural integrity and making the change process meaningful and contextually grounded.

This collective approach enables funders, decision-makers, and evaluators to see the full picture – supporting sustainable change through systemic collaboration and learning. Grounded in P-VIM principles, the CP-VIM embodies the Collective Impact emphasis on equity, inclusivity, and system-level transformation, ensuring evaluation captures all pathways of change toward sustainable, systemic, and societal outcomes.

Research consistently shows that Pacific communities face complex, interwoven challenges requiring coordinated, cross-agency, and culturally resonant responses. Evidence also validates that collective impact is most effective when system-level strategies are prioritised over isolated programme efforts. The CP-VIM can support cross-agency learning and decision-making through shared dashboards and/or joint evaluation processes that can be used to track collective outcomes/impact.

⁵ The Vfl approach provides a rigorous way to determine how well resources are used in policies and programmes, whether that use creates enough value, and how more value can be achieved. It was developed to meet the challenges of assessing value for money in complex and hard-to-measure contexts. Vfl is inter-disciplinary, combining insights from evaluation and economics. It applies evaluative reasoning to interpret mixed methods evidence through the lens of explicit criteria and standards. It is a participatory approach, centring stakeholders' values to support validity, credibility, and use of evaluation findings. More information is available at www.julianking.co.nz.

The CP-VIM is illustrated as the moana nui (vast ocean), inspired by Epeli Hau'ofa's (1994) vision of the sea as a connector rather than a divider. Each element reflects a core aspect of the CP-VIM:

- **The sand** forms the foundation, representing Pacific values that ground the design and implementation of individual P-VIM initiatives or activities, within their distinct yet interconnected contexts
- **The ocean currents** flowing from each initiative symbolise the activities and outputs that contribute toward shared outcomes
- **The moana nui - expansive ocean**, symbolises how collective outcomes and measurable steps toward change emerge from the combined contribution of all currents
- **The navigational star lines** represent guiding principles and robust standards that orient and sustain the currents ensuring coherence and integrity across the framework
- **The surrounding environment** symbolises evaluative criteria used to determine value, while the capitals represent sustainable and transformative societal impacts, indicating where that value is realised and reflected.

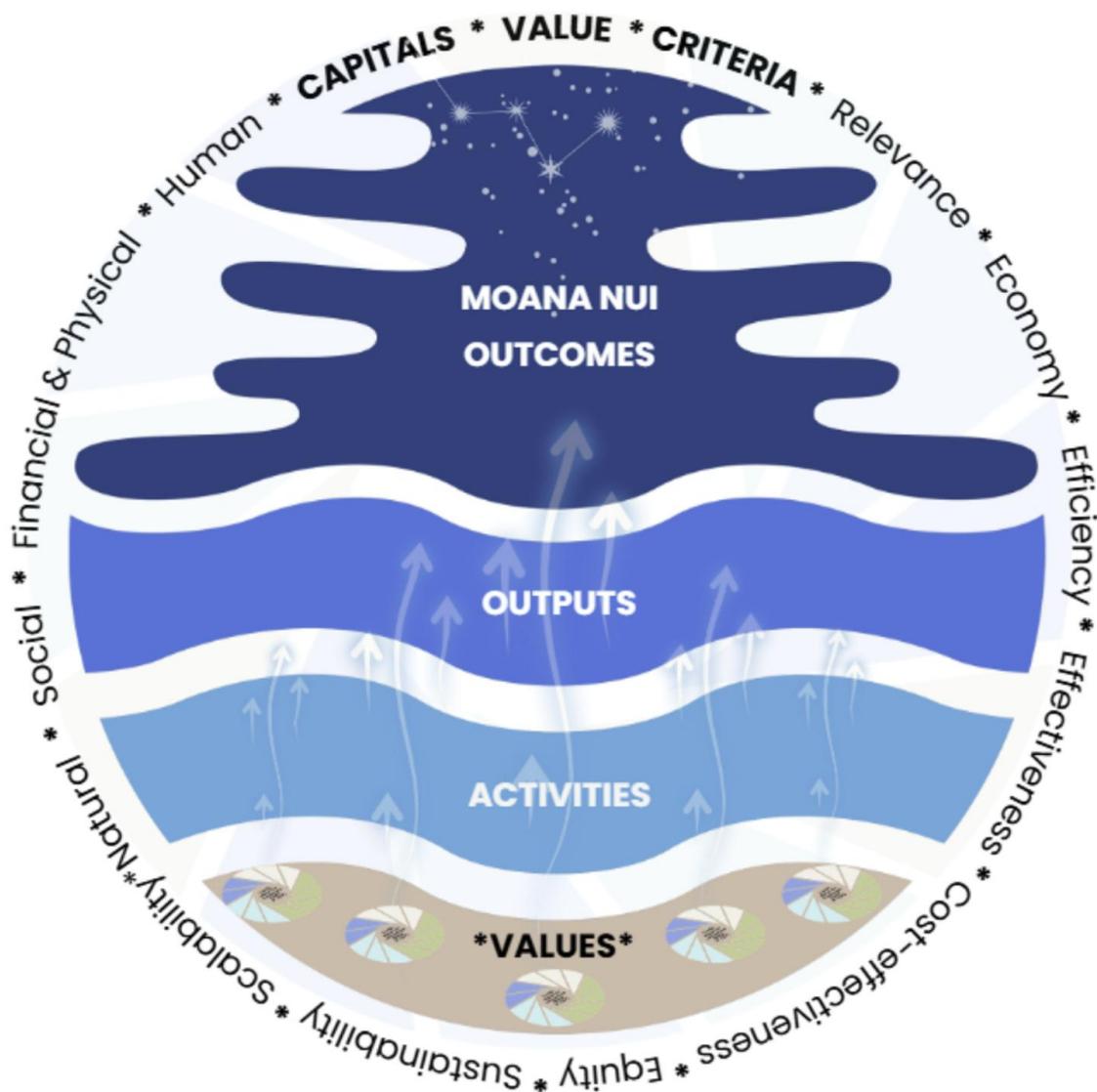


Figure 2: The Collective Pacific Value-for-Investment Model

3. Guiding principles

The P-VIM is firmly grounded in Pacific and Vfl values and principles. These principles are non-negotiable and constitute the foundational core upon which the model is designed and implemented. They are binding requirements that ensure cultural integrity and methodological robustness. Adherence to these principles is a condition of engagement, application, and accountability within the P-VIM framework.

Cultural scholarship and interdisciplinary thinking: Vfl integrates evaluation and economics to assess the merit, worth, and resource allocation of initiatives, providing a robust and holistic view of the value they generate. The P-VIM builds on this, prioritising Pacific scholarship as the lead discipline governing the use of evaluation and economics.

The P-VIM embeds Pacific research paradigms such as fa’afaletui, talanoa, and kakala, which are grounded in relational ethics and Pacific worldviews. This approach ensures that value assessments are culturally responsive and aligned with what truly matters to Pacific peoples. By moving beyond traditional evaluative and economic reasoning, P-VIM transforms Vfl into a framework that authentically reflects and prioritises Pacific values, perspectives, and lived realities.

It's the drivers... the philosophical drive...It's the paradigm of where the people are coming from. (Key Pacific Expert 7)

Cultural credibility and mixed methods: The Vfl approach draws on both quantitative and qualitative evidence to offer a richer, more nuanced understanding of resource use and value creation. By combining diverse forms of data, mixed methods enhance the reliability and validity of findings and recommendations, allowing for more robust evaluative judgements about how and why value is created.

In a Pacific context, this includes thoughtfully incorporating collective and individual perspectives, objective measures and subjective experiences, and culturally grounded ways of knowing and being. What counts as credible evidence extends beyond traditional Western standards to reflect Pacific epistemologies, in which credibility is grounded in cultural protocols, relationships, community engagement, and the relevance of evidence to Pacific lives and context.

The P-VIM builds on the mixed methods principle by grounding evaluation in culturally credible, responsive, and ethical approaches. Credibility is strengthened through evaluations led by individuals/groups with deep understanding and lived experience of Pacific and ethnic-specific communities. Genuine understanding of diverse realities, identities, and cultural nuances foster genuine buy-in, acceptance, and meaningful engagement.

The quantitative and qualitative - this is like music to my ears. (Key Pacific Expert 7)

Evaluative reasoning: Vfl provides a structured approach to assessing value by identifying criteria, setting standards, gathering and analysing evidence, and synthesising findings to reach evaluative conclusions. This often involves the use of rubrics - structured matrices that enable transparent and credible judgements about value for investment.

While criteria and standards provide structure and reinforce the logic underpinning evaluative judgements, using them well is inherently a relational and people-oriented practice. Vfi involves multiple evaluative reasoning strategies, such as collective deliberation, weighing competing arguments, and drawing on tacit judgement to arrive at well-formed conclusions (King, 2025; Schwandt, T.A., 2015). In a Pacific context, culturally appropriate engagement, protocols and practices will guide how these processes are carried out, who is involved, and who's voice is represented.

Our nation is sick to death of spending billions and billions of dollars on social issues, and we're not getting any better. In fact, sometimes it feels like we're going backwards. Why is that? Because the articulation is lost... (Key Pacific Expert 5)

Reflective and responsive practice: The P-VIM extends on the principle of evaluative reasoning by encouraging pauses and reflective inquiry on evaluative conclusions. It prompts agencies and evaluators to ask whether programmes are genuinely achieving their intended outcomes, whether processes are extractive or misaligned with community aspirations, and whether all reasonable efforts have been made to support optimal development, delivery, and achievement for both providers and participants.

The P-VIM invites courageous and principled responsiveness which may involve recalibrating or restarting programme and/or evaluation efforts to ensure optimal delivery, meaningful outcomes, and long-term sustainability.

[Often] the need is greater than the resources being made available...we need to be actively evaluating the effectiveness of our initiatives...adjusting them as we're doing them and driving and improving the results as we go... We also need a process to evaluate ourselves, what's working, what's not working and doing that in a live way. (Key Pacific Expert 10)

Participatory approach and meaningful relationships: Engaging stakeholders in the co-design and interpretation of evaluations enhances understanding, ownership, and credibility - while increasing the likelihood that findings will be relevant, valid, and used. Vfi emphasises that the values guiding evaluation should not be those of the evaluation team alone, but those of a relevant and diverse group of stakeholders. Including their perspectives in the development and use of rubric is essential for producing meaningful and transparent judgements about value (King, 2019; King et al., 2023a) Recent work on democratic deliberation as a guiding approach to assessing VfM for systems-change efforts further reinforces the idea of bringing 'the system into the room' for collective judgement-making (Peterson, 2025).

In Pacific-led evaluation, this means co-design not only serves technical and practical purposes but is also a means of upholding cultural expectations around collaboration, reciprocity, and respect for diverse voices. For programmes in Pacific communities, participatory approaches ensure the evaluation process aligns with community values, fosters deeper relationships, and generates findings that resonate and endure within the cultural contexts.

The P-VIM strengthens the principle of participatory approach by recognising that the *depth* and *quality* of engagement are critical to its success. It is essential to ensure *teu le vā* - the nurturing of respectful and reciprocal relationships - throughout the entire duration of an initiative. This principle emphasises the importance of establishing and maintaining genuine relationships between funders,

providers and communities at every stage of the P-VIM. It urges agencies and evaluators to actively acknowledge and address power imbalances. This ensures that evaluation processes are culturally respectful and equitable and designed to enhance the relevance, integrity and impact of P-VIM initiatives.

We're very good at collaborating, but somewhere along the line we lose the interoperability side of it, and you have to re-establish the vā. Teu le vā is so important every step along the way. (Key Pacific Expert 3)

Professional practice: Professional practice in Vfi begins with a commitment to integrity, upholding established programme evaluation standards and codes of ethics. Evaluators and decision-makers must approach each assessment with genuine openness, reaching conclusions through honest, reflective, transparent judgement rather than predetermined agendas. Vfi is designed to guide decisions that create real public benefit, based on rigorous evaluations and robust evidence.

Clear and transparent reporting is essential. Findings should be communicated directly and accessibly, with upfront answers to evaluation questions, explicit explanations of how conclusions were reached, and logical links from evidence to judgements that are easy to follow. Reports should openly state values, assumptions, and limitations.

When you're talking about standards, it's about the quality of what you do, rather than just the craft itself...When Konai talks about kakala she always says make sure you're taking the best flowers to create something that you would be proud of. So when you put it on a person, you take pride in what you've done. (Key Pacific Expert 12)

Data stewardship and digital ethics: As the P-VIM evolves within a digital and AI-enabled environment, responsible data governance becomes a cornerstone for effective evaluation and agency/cross-agency interoperability. This principle emphasises active stewardship over passive hoarding, promoting culturally respectful data sharing that enables collaboration and system interoperability. Data must be treated as a relational asset - accurate, secure, and managed with integrity - while honouring cultural protocols and community consent. Embedding digital ethics ensures transparency, trust, and informed decision-making, while safeguarding privacy and cultural values. It also prepares agencies for emerging technologies through clear rules, safeguards, and accountability. Effective interoperability relies on these practices, with systems designed for seamless data exchange using common standards. Sharing insights openly and ethically strengthens trust, reduces duplication, and supports collective learning across P-VIM and CP-VIM frameworks.

Now, the reason why I raise the data hoarding versus data stewardship and collaboration versus interoperability is because as we move into a more digital frame, and some of this might be done via AI, understanding what you've got and how you share it is important, and then proactively sharing it. (Key Pacific Expert 3)

4. Guidelines for application

The P-VIM is structured around four progressive waves of activity with specific components: Prepare (components 1.1 to 1.3), Design (components 2.1 to 2.4), Implement (components 3.1 to 3.3) and Inform (components 4.1 to 4.2).

While the model presents the waves in a sequential format, different components may be undertaken concurrently depending on the context and complexity of the evaluation. For example, components 1.3 and 2.1 (which involve co-creating the logic/theory of change, monitoring and evaluation framework and value proposition), and components 2.2 and 2.3 (which involve co-creating criteria and standards) – naturally complement each other. Early establishment of meaningful and authentic relationships between evaluators, agencies, and providers is critical for navigating within and across components.

4.1. Wave 1 – Prepare: Teu le vā

Component 1.1: Understand the purpose

This first P-VIM component focuses on laying a strong foundation and setting the scene as a priority for the evaluation by clearly defining the initiative and its evaluation purpose and scope. This component emphasises intentional preparation, grounded in Pacific cultural values and respectful relationship-building among agencies, providers, and communities. This component is inspired by the Teu (preparation) phase of the kakala framework (Thaman, 1997), which affirms the importance of designing evaluation with clear intent and cultural responsiveness.

Key elements for agencies to articulate about initiatives and evaluations include:

- **Rationale and purpose:** Provide a clear policy statement backed by evidence that demonstrates the need for the initiative and evaluation
- **Objectives and aims:** Outline what the initiative and evaluation seek to achieve, why it matters and how it intends to create meaningful benefits and change for Pacific communities
- **Comprehensive context analysis:** Identify other initiatives and investments that co-contribute to collective impact. Mapping these connections strengthens coherence, avoids duplication, and ensures the evaluation reflects the broader system of interventions influencing outcomes
- **Progress realism:** Identify key agency contacts and sponsors who are responsible and accountable for the initiative, and ensure transparent reporting of the initiative's current stage of development to support the establishment of appropriate and realistic evaluation expectations
- **Provider relationship confirmation:** Confirm the nature of the relationship with the provider or programme deliverer, including who within the agency holds this relationship and the type of engagement - whether contractual, collaborative, advisory, or otherwise - to ensure alignment, trust, and effective communication throughout the evaluation process.

- **Evaluation questions:** Draft clear, focused questions to guide the evaluation noting that these will likely be refined as the P-VIM process progresses
- **Data landscape:** Identify the internal and external data sources, documents, reports, and information evaluators may need to access noting additional evidence may be needed once criteria and standards have been agreed. It is also important to acknowledge challenges and risks to the evaluation process such as accessing key information within specified timeframes.
- **Integrated Data Infrastructure alignment:** While the inclusion of IDI should be considered, it may not be suitable for all commissioning agencies. Where applicable, it is essential to clearly define expectations around IDI use and ensure that evaluation teams have adequate technical expertise and agency support to either access relevant data and conduct analysis or interpret/integrate agency-led IDI analysis within the required timeframes.

Component 1.2: Identify the messenger and message

This component focuses on ensuring that the right people are communicating the right message, in culturally appropriate and context-sensitive ways. It's about building trust, clarity, and connection - guided by the principle of *teu le vā*, which calls for bridging the space between evaluators/researchers and policymakers through shared agendas and collaborative processes.

Key considerations for agencies include:

- **Project management clarity:** Maintain consistent and transparent project management practices, including thorough handovers and induction processes for new team members.
- **Messaging and expectations:** Provide clear, consistent messaging to partner agencies and providers about the evaluation purpose and expectations. This helps reduce the relational burden on evaluators and ensures all parties understand their role in the evaluation process.
- **Bridging relationships:** Actively foster collaboration between evaluators, providers and policymakers, ensuring that the evaluation is shaped by shared priorities and mutual respect.
- **Selecting the preferred evaluation provider – core competencies:**
 - Extensive experience in Pacific-led evaluation and best practice with a demonstrated commitment to building the capacity and capability of Pacific evaluators.
 - Strong cultural competency, including the ability to engage meaningfully across diverse Pacific communities. This requires a deep understanding of and respect for cultural protocols and relational dynamics, and the flexibility to tailor engagement strategies to suit different contexts and audiences of varying cultural and social standing. Evaluators should be able to offer communication in Pacific languages where required.
 - Nuanced understanding of Pacific diversity, including the similarities and differences that exist within and across Pacific and ethnic-specific cultures. This ensures the evaluation approach is both inclusive and contextually grounded.
 - Demonstrated experience in culturally responsive and inclusive practice, particularly where Pacific peoples are a distinct subgroup within a broader evaluation. This includes:

- Engaging Pacific evaluators throughout all phases of the evaluation process, including design, implementation, analysis, and dissemination, to ensure meaningful participation and cultural alignment
- Prioritising Pacific-led analysis and reporting to uphold cultural integrity, relevance, and authenticity in the findings
- Ensuring a commitment to building Pacific evaluation capability and capacity by providing adequate technical and cultural mentoring, supervision and/or peer review.

It is important to note the P-VIM core evaluator competency considerations complement agency procurement principles to ensure evaluators are independent, free from conflicts of interest, and able to deliver evaluations that are both culturally responsive and professionally rigorous.

Component 1.3: Engage the full spectrum of knowledge

This component centres on inclusive knowledge-sharing and validation, guided by the fa’afaletui methodology (Tamasese, Peteru and Waldegrave, 1997). It ensures diverse knowledge, perspectives are heard, respected and included in the co-creation of a theory of change, intervention logic model and monitoring and evaluation framework:

- The mountaintop - offering a broad, strategic overview
- The treetop - providing a connected, intermediate view
- The canoe - representing lived experience and grassroots insight.

Key considerations for agencies and evaluators to honour this approach include:

- Establishing an advisory group inclusive of technical and cultural leadership to guide the evaluation process, and ensure cultural integrity, relevance, and accountability throughout all P-VIM components
- Prioritising broad and meaningful representation by thoughtfully selecting participants across Pacific communities - considering factors such as age, gender, status, ethnicity, geography, and other dimensions relevant to the initiative. Representation should span funding agencies (national and regional), service providers or delivery partners, and Pacific recipients (individuals and families), where appropriate and feasible.
- Co-creating the theory of change, intervention evaluation logic and monitoring and evaluation framework through engagements with different houses of knowledge fosters shared understanding, aligns expectations, and enhances cultural resonance. This process also requires critical reflection of diverse knowledge systems to understand nuanced interpretations and ensure the initiative and its evaluation are informed, inclusive and contextually grounded.

4.2. Wave 2 – Design: Vfi

Component 2.1: Understand the programme

Designing a Vfi evaluation begins with a deep and deliberate understanding of the programme - its purpose, context, and the needs of those it serves. This step lays the groundwork for meaningful evaluation by ensuring clarity and alignment among stakeholders.

Key actions for evaluators include:

- **Investing time in understanding the programme:** A deep-dive into understanding the programme may be through conducting thorough document reviews and/or facilitating planning workshops to build clear and shared understandings of the programme’s purpose, the needs it seeks to address, and how it is expected to roll-out. Engaging with primary evaluation users, stakeholders, and partners early on helps clarify their information needs and expectations.
- **Developing evaluation questions:** Effective evaluation questions have a foundation in evaluation theory and are shaped by the perspectives and priorities of those involved. Stakeholders’ insights should guide the development of focused, relevant questions that reflect the realities of the programme. Where agencies or funders already have specific questions in mind, these should be reviewed and refined using evaluative expertise to ensure they are robust, culturally appropriate, and aligned with the programme’s intent and will generate the information needed by funders and service providers.
- **Extending the theory of change:** Vfi builds on a theory of change by articulating a value proposition or theory of value creation and moves thinking from ‘how change happens’ to ‘how value is created’ and making explicit that impact and value are related but distinct (King, 2021). These frameworks can be integrated into a single visual diagram, serving as a reference point for causal and evaluative claims and helping to identify context-specific Vfi criteria.

The P-VIM approach enhances this by reframing Vfi key questions within Pacific values and contexts, enabling deeper, culturally resonant dialogue (Table 1). Depending on the context and audience, discussing these questions in respective Pacific languages may further enrich talanoa beyond superficial dialogue.

These reframed questions are purposed to support the co-creation of a value proposition and move talanoa (conversation) and thinking from talanoa vave (surface-level) to talanoa faka’eke’eke (probing and reflective) (Vaioloti, 2006). Depending on context and audience, discussing these questions in respective Pacific languages may further enrich talanoa beyond superficial dialogue.

Table 1: P-VIM key questions to inform the value proposition and theory of value creation

Vfi question	Reframed P-VIM question	Simplified
Who is [the project] valuable to, and how is it valuable to them?	Who are the Pacific individuals, families and/or communities that this project serves, and in what ways does it contribute to their individual and/or collective wellbeing and aspirations?	What is the project trying to achieve? Who benefits from it, and how does it benefit them?
The reframed question acknowledges Pacific individuals as part of interconnected family and community collectives, where personal and shared wellbeing aspirations are interdependent.		
What inequities does the project tackle, and how? How should resources, actions, impacts and value be allocated to achieve this?	What challenges are we confronting, and how can our collective actions and resources restore balance and uplift our people?	How does this project create fairness and belonging?
The reframed question shifts focus from abstract resource allocation to how the initiative engages with the lived realities and aspirations of Pacific communities.		
What resources are invested, by whom? (not just money). What does good stewardship of those resources look like?	What resources (including knowledge, time, and support) are put into this project, and by whom? How do we care for and use these contributions in ways that reflect respect, reciprocity, and shared responsibility for all involved (consider Pacific individuals, families, communities, funders, providers etc)	Who is giving their time, knowledge, and support to this project, and how do we make sure we honour these contributions with respect and integrity?
The reframed question highlights relational accountability, shared responsibility, and cultural stewardship, valuing contributions of knowledge, time, and support.		
What principles and ways of working will help ensure good value is created?	What values and ways of working will help us create outcomes that are meaningful, respectful, and beneficial for Pacific individuals, families and/or communities?	Why will/do we benefit from this project?
The reframed question is grounded in relational ways of working, collective wellbeing, and cultural integrity.		
What real changes will we see in people, places and things?	What meaningful changes or transformation will we see in our people, families, communities, and environments - upholding cultural integrity, collective wellbeing, and the aspirations of Pacific families across generations?	What difference will the project make for Pacific individuals, families, and communities reached? How sustainable is this?
The reframed question emphasises relationality, intergenerational collective impact, and cultural resonance, which reflect shared Pacific values - service, reciprocity, and respect.		
What critical factors make the greatest difference to whether the Project creates a lot of value or a little?	What guiding values, key relationships, and collaborative approaches will most enhance the value this project delivers to our communities and environments?	What ways of working, values, and relationships help make sure the project brings real and lasting benefits to our people and communities?
The reframed question focuses on values, relationships, and practice - highlighting shared responsibility and cultural integrity.		

Component 2.2: Co-create criteria

Vfi criteria are key aspects of good resource use. These criteria help evaluators examine not just what went into a programme (*resources and inputs*), but what came out of it (*outputs and outcomes*), and most importantly, the value created and whether the trade-off compared to other forms of investment was worth it.

It is important to note that there is no universal checklist of criteria. As Schwandt (2015) and King et al., (2023a) highlight, criteria must be defined in context, which means working closely with stakeholders to shape what “value” looks like in each unique setting. Nevertheless, two widely adopted and conceptually aligned frameworks - the “Five Es” (King & OPM, 2018; Department for International Development [DFID], 2011) and the OECD DAC evaluation criteria (OECD Development Assistance Committee, 2019) - offer useful reference points. The P-VIM draws on both sets of criteria from both models (Equity, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Cost-Effectiveness, Economy, Relevance, Coherence, Impact, Sustainability) as building blocks for context-specific Vfi criteria and to ensure that immediate, interim, and long-term aspects of an initiative are thoroughly considered. Criteria for ‘Scalability’ is also included to support sustainable growth and adaptability.

The P-VIM emphasises the importance of re-engaging with stakeholders to review and refine the P-VIM criteria most relevant to specific evaluation needs and circumstances – defining them contextually and removing overlaps between the 5Es and OECD DAC criteria to produce a seamless framework. This approach emphasises the importance of cultivating meaningful relationships that persist beyond the formal duration of a programme (see Figure 3).

The point isn't to use all the criteria in every Vfi assessment but rather to consider and select appropriate criteria for the circumstances (King, 2024)

Each agreed P-VIM criterion is paired with a specific Vfi/P-VIM question (see Table 1) that guides evaluators in assessing value. For example, the criterion of *effectiveness* links to the question ‘To what extent did the initiative achieve its intended outcomes?’ Similarly, *equity* connects to ‘Who benefits and who might be missing out?’ These questions operationalise the criteria, ensuring evaluative judgements are transparent and culturally relevant.

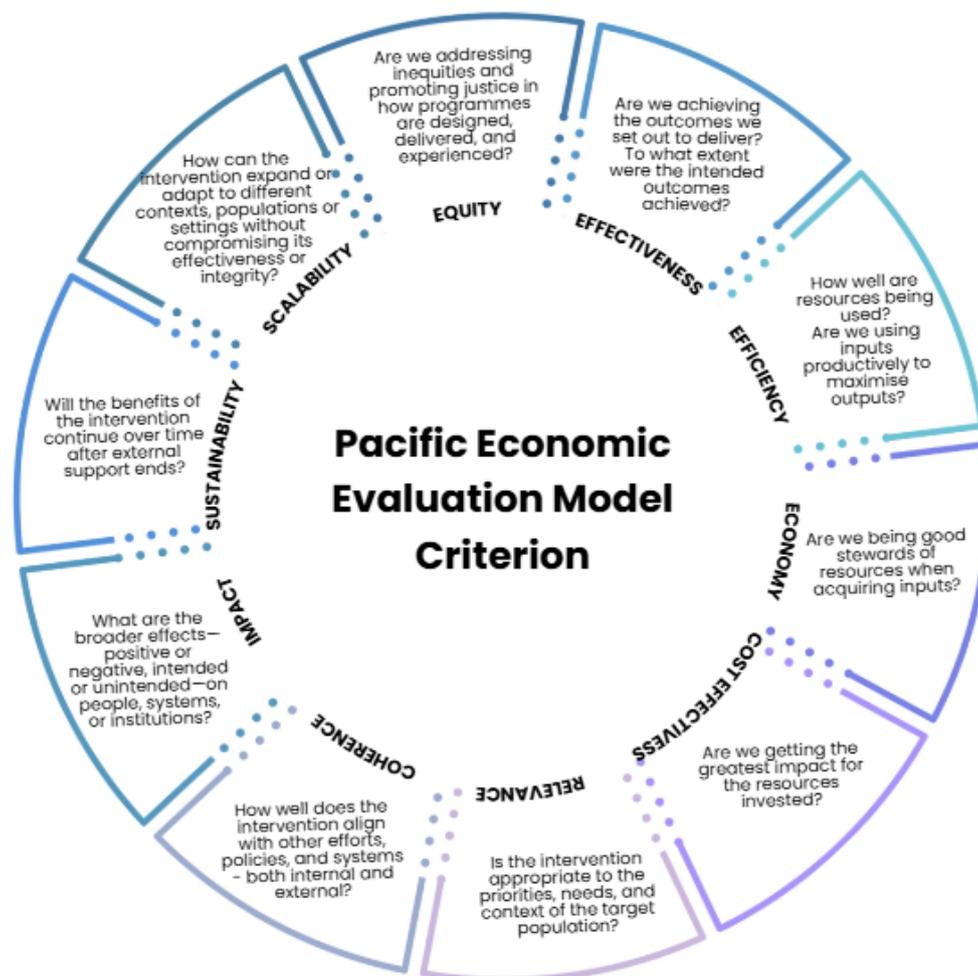


Figure 3: Pacific Value-For-Investment Model criterion

Component 2.3: Co-create standards

Like criteria, standards should be developed with stakeholders. Criteria and standards are developed sequentially, often as part of the same workshop(s) or consultative process(es).

Vfi standards represent predetermined levels of performance aligned with each evaluation criterion. These standards clarify what constitutes evidence at varying degrees of quality, value, or effectiveness (King, et al., 2023a) and provide a shared foundation for making evaluative judgements.

The P-VIM standards (Figure 4) represent progressive steps, metaphorically aligned with a journey guided by navigational stars. These star lines orient and sustain the flow of currents, holding the P-VIM framework together with coherence and integrity. Beyond their functional role, they are luminous and symbolic, embodying the wisdom of early Pacific navigators who mastered wayfinding with precision, foresight, and harmony. Navigation guided by the stars was deliberate and disciplined, requiring patience and skill to interpret patterns across the horizon.

Just as navigational stars guided journeys across the moana nui, demanding navigational excellence and mastery, the P-VIM rating scale illustrates four constellation levels that reflect progress against the rubrics: 1. Emerging (a simple, small constellation), 2. Establishing (more stars forming partial patterns), 3. Embedding (clear and luminous constellations), 4. Excelling (large, interconnected

constellation). The definitions of the four levels in the following diagram are adapted from King & OPM (2023).

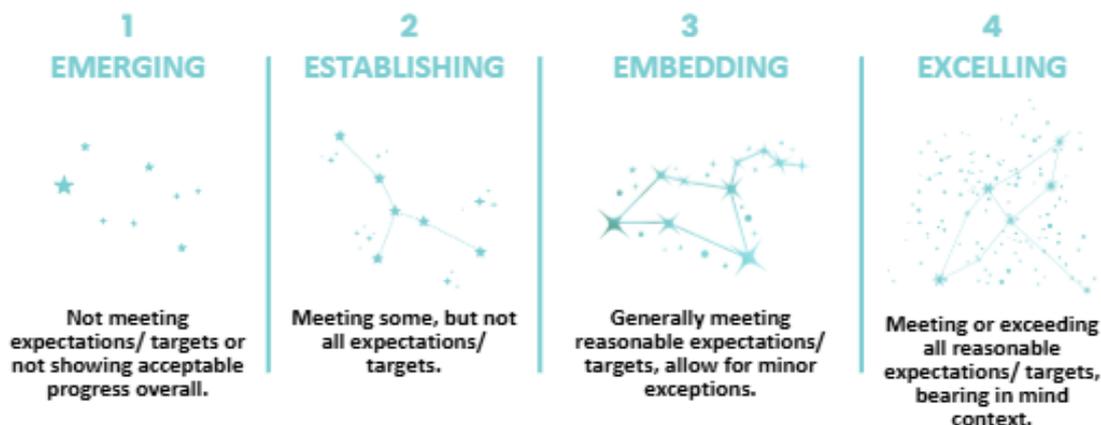


Figure 4: P-VIM standards

Rubric is a matrix that connects P-VIM criteria to standards, serving as a practical tool for assessing progress and outcomes. Multiple rubrics may be developed for different criteria but all must be anchored in the co-created value proposition and shared definitions established earlier in the Vfi design phase. Creating effective rubrics requires skilled facilitation and meaningful engagement with stakeholders to co-create a shared articulation of values (King, 2023). This process is reliant on identifying relevant stakeholders, encouraging inclusive participation, suspending premature measurement discussions, tailoring rubrics to the specific context, and maintaining simplicity (King & OPM, 2018).

The P-VIM emphasises the importance of re-engaging with stakeholders to review and refine the rubrics and standards. Pilot scoring⁶ and consensus discussion⁷ are also encouraged to ensure the rubrics are fit for purpose.

Component 2.4: Identify evidence needed

Once rubric(s) are developed, it is important to identify credible types of evidence needed to address the P-VIM criteria and standards and the methods needed to collect and analyse the evidence (including suitable approaches to causal inference) (King et al, 2023a).

Evaluation literature broadly highlights mixed-methods research as key to unravelling the full complexity of real-world initiatives. Combining robust quantitative data with rich qualitative insights, delivers a 360-degree view that neither method alone can achieve. This approach not only strengthens the validity and depth of findings but also fuels innovation by bridging numerical trends with human experiences, making research outcomes more impactful and actionable. Leading experts and institutions champion mixed methods as good practice for rigorous, comprehensive inquiry,

⁶ A trial run where evaluators independently score a small sample of real or mock evidence using the draft rubric.

⁷ After scoring independently, evaluators meet to compare results and talk through differences. Consensus discussions strengthen inter-rater reliability and ensure the rubric reflects shared understanding rather than individual assumptions.

empowering researchers to illuminate nuance and inform better decisions in policy and practice (NIH OBSSR, 2018; Creswell, 2015; Fetters et al., 2013; King et al., 2023).

Pacific evaluation highlights the importance of amalgamating Pacific research methodologies with qualitative and quantitative methods. A diverse mix of culturally responsive and context-specific methods have been used to capture experiences, processes, and outcomes for Pacific peoples. These included talanoa-based interviews and focus groups, case studies, quantitative surveys, relational engagement and cultural-participatory immersion, document and literature reviews, thematic analysis of provider reports, analysis of provider administrative data, and initial - follow-up and sense-making talanoa with diverse stakeholder groups. While many of these methods may appear generic, their true value lies in how they are applied within a Pacific evaluation and research context. When grounded in Pacific research methodologies, their intent, purpose, and use are reframed through a cultural lens, ensuring that the information and data collected genuinely reflect the depth, authenticity, and lived realities of Pacific peoples.

In a P-VIM evaluation, Pacific methodologies as the primary epistemological frames that define what counts as credible evidence. The potential inclusion of economic evaluation methods (such as cost-benefit analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis or cost-utility analysis) should also be considered. As noted by King (2023) and King & Hurrell (2024) economic methods contribute to the overall assessment of VfI but are not enough on their own to fully evaluate complex social initiatives.

In parallel, there is growing interest in the potential use of the IDI to support evaluation and policy insights. While the IDI offers a powerful platform for linking administrative data across sectors, it presents limitations for Pacific data. These include misclassification, underrepresentation and limited detail about ethnic-specific groups, and the risk of reinforcing deficit narratives if data is not interpreted through a culturally grounded lens. Additionally, important and relevant data overlooked, ignored or not collected at all. Moreover, the IDI's structure may not fully capture the relational, collective, and contextual dimensions that are central to Pacific ways of knowing and being.

Therefore, any potential inclusion of the IDI within P-VIM must be complemented by culturally responsive qualitative methods and Pacific methodologies such as talanoa, to centre Pacific voices and ensure that data use contributes to empowerment, rather than marginalisation. This dual approach helps safeguard the integrity of Pacific data and supports more meaningful, equitable, and contextually relevant data collection.

...the data tells you what the problem is, and the lived experience tells you why people behave that way to get that problem...give them both equal weighting right throughout... (Key Pacific Expert 3)

4.3. Wave 3 – Implement: Vfl evaluation

Component 3.1: Gather evidence

Collecting evidence requires adherence to ethical standards, Pacific research and evaluation best practice, and a commitment to protecting:

- **Pacific participants:** TIRIA’s organisational values and Pacific evaluation principles⁸ grounded in Pacific research methodologies, exemplify practical ways to place Pacific peoples at the centre of evaluation design and delivery (Figure 5). Their practice integrates diverse Pacific worldviews, knowledge systems, and voices. This approach fosters respectful, strengths-based engagement that reflects Pacific realities and identities. TIRIA’s practice focuses on valuing Pacific ways of knowing-being-doing, building strong relationships, and working together to make sense of what matters. It aims to ensure that evaluations support and reflect Pacific peoples’ voices and leadership, rather than merely collecting data from them. This articulation describes ethical evaluation practice requirements for P-VIM evidence gathering and opportunities to inform optimal policy, programme design, and evaluation. Pacific evaluators lead all components of an evaluation from design to analysis and reporting, framing findings with critical consciousness, cultural integrity and relevance, and enabling evaluations that are not only methodologically rigorous but also meaningful, transparent and empowering for Pacific communities.
- **Pacific data sovereignty:** It is essential that the P-VIM upholds the principles of Pacific data sovereignty - a transformative movement asserting the rights and responsibilities of Pacific peoples to control the collection, access, analysis, management, and dissemination of data derived from their communities. Pacific data sovereignty focuses on culturally grounded stewardship, ensuring data practices reflect Pacific knowledge systems, traditional values, and aspirations, positioning data as a living taonga linked to ancestors and future generations. Key principles include transparency, accountability, reciprocity, and respect for indigenous epistemologies, with emphasis on avoiding exploitation of cultural knowledge, prioritising community benefit, and aligning data management with Pacific worldviews. This approach aims to build social connectedness and empower Pacific-driven decision-making and policy frameworks. Reports from the Pacific Data Sovereignty Network and related government initiatives highlight the need for Pacific-led data governance to enhance wellbeing and protect digital autonomy amid emerging AI and data infrastructures. Shared data sovereignty principles include cultural integrity, community engagement, and ethical use to ensure equitable outcomes for Pacific peoples (Pacific Data Sovereignty Network, 2021).

⁸ <https://tiria.nz/>



Transparency

Aua le naunau i le i'a, ae manumanu i le uega

It is wiser to be mindful of the weight and impact of a catch, than to break the net and lose all hope.

- At the outset of any Pacific evaluation/research, we reflect critically and ask ourselves questions posed by Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese (2005): Who will benefit from this production of knowledge? Research and evaluation is not exempt from the structures and from the ideologies of the dominant culture. What steps can be taken by evaluators to ensure that the knowledges they produce do not further marginalise Pacific people?



Integrity

E sui faiga, ae tumau le fa'avae

We have different methods, but the foundation remains the same.

- We gather and interweave different perspectives into every phase of the evaluation, grounding analysis, interpretation, and reporting in Pacific understandings, knowledge and ways of doing/being.
- We embrace the richness of Pacific cultures, recognising both similarities and differences in ethnic specific and historical reference points.
- We create safe spaces for open dialogue, ensuring all stakeholders feel respected and heard.



Respect

Teu le vā

Nurturing relationships as a collective approach to research and evaluation.

- We build respectful and meaningful relationships with all from the outset, engaging early and remaining accessible to all stakeholders throughout the evaluation.
- We maintain open communication, creating space and opportunities to add new strands of knowledge from diverse stakeholder perspectives at different timepoints.
- We are respectful of Pacific cultural protocols and behaviours, communicate in Pacific languages where possible, and provide clear and appropriate information to support participants to make informed decisions.



Innovation

E fofō e le alamea le alamea

The cure for the toxic sting of the star fish is the star fish itself

- We focus on strengths, partnering with our communities to identify and enhance solutions.
- We provide accessible reporting, tailored to meet the needs of diverse stakeholders.
- We create concise and engaging reports that integrate quantitative and qualitative data.



Accountability

O lupe sa vao ese'ese ae ua fuifui fa'atasi

We are doves from different parts of the forest but connected in one cause.

- We engage to listen and ensure our Pacific voices are heard, valued and represented.
- We put our clients and participants at the centre by considering the outcomes that are important to them.

Figure 5: TIRIA - Tangata o le Moana evaluation values and principles

Component 3.2: Analyse data and triangulate findings

This component focuses on analysis of individual and diverse methods and streams of evidence identifying findings that are relevant to the evaluation questions, criteria, and standards.

Prioritising Pacific perspectives is vital to ensure that analyses reflect Pacific priorities and values. Both quantitative and qualitative data must be interpreted through pan-Pacific and, where possible, ethnic-specific worldviews. These cultural lenses are critical to making sense of key themes and findings, and recognising the diversity, mixed ethnic representation, varying levels of cultural identity and orientation, and sub-groupings present within Pacific communities (e.g., New Zealand-born and Island born participants, young and mature participants, different levels of status and standing in families and communities etc.). Evaluators must also remain critically conscious of their own cultural limitations and foreground the cultural contexts of Pacific participants throughout the process.

Triangulating findings from multiple methods, data sources, or perspectives examining the same phenomena enhances the credibility and depth of the evaluation by allowing cross-verification of results. It helps identify patterns, consistencies, and discrepancies across different datasets or stakeholder groups, contributing to a more robust understanding of the initiative. When multiple evaluation team members are involved in analyses, regular meetings are essential to explore intra-group and inter-group similarities and differences (TIRIA, n.d.). This collaborative process ensures that diverse viewpoints are considered and that findings are interpreted with cultural and contextual sensitivity.

Addressing causality in complex, evolving initiatives where consistent quantitative outcome data are unavailable demands a shift from traditional statistical attribution methods to a contribution-based approach. By employing a theory of change framework, outcomes are mapped as sequential links in a logical chain of events, examining whether the collective evidence at each step reasonably supports that the initiative influenced observed changes. While this approach does not definitively prove causality or quantify impact, it provides a coherent, credible narrative designed to convince a thoughtful, skeptical observer that the intervention likely made a meaningful contribution. This pragmatic method aligns with best practices in theory-based evaluation and serves to respect cultural nuance and evidential complexity within Pacific evaluation contexts (Weiss, 1995).

Component 3.3: Synthesise the evidence, criteria and standards, and make judgements

A critical feature of the VfI approach is the use of rubrics as the explicit framework for guiding evaluative judgements. Rubrics, setting out the agreed criteria and clearly defining what different levels of performance or value look like, ensure the evaluation is guided by transparent, shared values rather than by implicit or ad hoc reasoning. During synthesis, evaluators and stakeholders use the rubric to integrate findings across multiple evidence sources and criteria, supporting a disciplined, structured process to guide deliberations and reach credible evaluative judgements.

This approach moves the synthesis of evidence beyond narrative or thematic summary and provides a principled basis for answering the key VfI questions, such as: *was the investment worthwhile, to what extent, and why?* In this process, the rubric provides the bridge from evidence to reasoned, justifiable conclusions – anchoring evaluative reasoning in clarity, consistency, and collective understanding.

Synthesising findings and integrating insights from various sources help to form a coherent and meaningful narrative that moves beyond comparison and builds a broader picture of what the evidence collectively reveals. Effective synthesis requires evaluators to reflect on how different pieces of evidence relate to one another, especially across different contexts and communities. It also involves identifying overarching themes, tensions, and opportunities that emerge from the data.

Sharing synthesised insights with relevant stakeholder groups supports meaningful interpretation and enables evaluative judgements to be made against agreed criteria and standards.

Re-engaging with stakeholders through interim findings or sense-making fono/workshops plays a vital role in upholding Pacific data sovereignty - ensuring transparency, accountability, reciprocity, and respect. These engagements also strengthen evaluation depth, credibility and validity by providing space for participants to reflect on the findings, question them, and offer insights into what

those findings might mean for creating future value. Importantly, this collaborative approach need not undermine the evaluation's independence, as final judgements remain with the evaluation team where independence is required (King et al., 2023a). On the other hand, some evaluations may be designed to facilitate processes in which stakeholders reach their own evaluative judgements (Gates & Schwandt, 2021).

Contextually, it all makes sense. What does that look like practically? ...to say this is the data we need, and then looking at, well, this is the only data we're going to get. What does that mean in terms of the success of the evaluation and having the different scales of reality? (Key Pacific Expert 1)

It is important to note that synthesising findings and making evaluative judgements can occur in less-than-ideal conditions. Agencies, evaluators, and providers may face operational challenges, resource limitations, or external factors that slow progress. Administrative data may not always be captured before judgements are required, creating gaps in evidence.

In these instances, transparency is critical. Evaluators should clearly state what activities have and have not been delivered, explain the reasons for partial implementation, and specify what information was available and used to inform judgements. They must also identify limitations - such as missing data - and outline what is required to make fully informed judgements in the future, including whether adequate processes are in place to capture data moving forward.

This approach applies across all evaluation types. In **formative evaluations**, early-stage judgements about design or readiness often rely on limited administrative data. Here, evaluators should focus on available qualitative insights, such as stakeholder feedback, and clearly note what additional data will be needed to refine recommendations. For **process evaluations**, incomplete implementation administrative data – such as missing participation records or activity logs – requires evaluators to document what was delivered versus planned and explain operational constraints. Judgements should highlight whether processes are on track and what adjustments are needed to improve fidelity. In **outcomes evaluations**, missing or delayed outcome data means evaluators must avoid overstating impact. Judgements should be based on available evidence, such as partial survey results, and include caveats about data gaps, alongside recommendations for future data collection to confirm results.

By applying these practices, evaluators maintain integrity in judgement-making while providing a clear roadmap for strengthening evidence over time. This approach ensures that even under constraints, evaluations remain transparent, culturally grounded, and aligned with P-VIM principles.

4.4. Wave 4 – Inform: Tausi le vā

Component 4.1: Report and use findings

The purpose of reporting is to clearly convey what the evaluation uncovered - laying out the key judgements backed by solid evidence and clear reasoning (King, 2019). A strong evaluation report presents a concise summary of findings at the beginning, including P-VIM ratings like excellent or good, aligned with the criteria. Readers should not have to dig or engage in mental gymnastics to find answers to the key evaluation questions (KEQs).

Stakeholder and agency input on draft reports is highly valued, as it contributes to a more robust and inclusive review process; however, it remains essential that evaluators uphold neutrality throughout.

Another essential aspect of P-VIM reporting is to ensure utility of the evaluation findings by:

- Opening with a foreword that outlines how agencies have responded to the findings and how they plan to put them into action
- Sharing findings in multiple formats so they are accessible and meet the needs of different audiences/readers
- Exploring opportunities to develop ethnic-specific reports tailored to the unique needs of various Pacific populations where feasible.

Component 4.2: Disseminate findings

Disseminating evaluation findings is essential not only for transparency and accountability, but also for upholding the tenets of Pacific cultural concepts such as *tausi le vā* (maintaining relationships, and awareness of impacts on others) that underpin the P-VIM.

Dissemination also acts to:

- Empower communities: Sharing findings ensures that Pacific peoples benefit from the knowledge generated, enabling informed decision-making and community-led action
- Builds trust and reciprocity: Dissemination reflects an evaluators respect for the time, knowledge and insights shared by participants
- Support collective learning: Pacific evaluation often involves communal knowledge. Disseminating findings helps strengthen collective understanding and intergenerational learning
- Promote ethical practice: Ethical Pacific evaluation requires that outcomes are not hidden or held solely by institutions - dissemination ensures transparency and shared ownership
- Influence policy and practice: When findings are shared widely, they can inform culturally responsive policies, services, and systems that better serve Pacific communities.

4.5. Guidelines for applying the Collective Pacific Value-for-Investment Model

The CP-VIM emphasises the need to move beyond measuring isolated programme success to understanding collective contributions to shared outcomes and impacts. It assumes that each ocean current - representing a distinct stream, initiative, or community within a broader programme - has its own P-VIM, including a co-created logic model or theory of change, value proposition and evaluation components. In practice, however, currents often vary in evaluation and data maturity. They may be at different stages of development, delivery, and readiness: some with well-developed frameworks and monitoring systems; others with only partial structures or limited processes. These currents may also operate in isolation, with minimal coherence or awareness of each other's efforts.

Key considerations for evaluators and agencies to navigate the richness and complexity of diverse and disconnected currents include:

- **Assessment of evaluation readiness:** Review each ocean current’s existing evaluation components (value propositions, logic models, and theories of change) to determine their level of development and alignment with CP-VIM. Identify which currents have established P-VIMs and assess their completeness and quality to determine which of the following steps apply:
 1. **Refine existing P-VIMs:** Where P-VIMs are in place, re-engage with ocean current stakeholders to revisit and refine components, ensuring they reflect up-to-date realities and aspirations.
 2. **Extend P-VIM logic:** For ocean currents with standard evaluation approaches but no P-VIM, develop the value proposition, criteria and standards starting at component 4 of the P-VIM process.
 3. **Develop foundational P-VIM components:** Where no evaluation logic exists, begin at component 1 of the P-VIM. Provide tailored support to co-create intervention logic, value-for-investment pathways, and culturally relevant evaluation criteria.
- **Synthesis across ocean currents:** Where multiple currents have new or refined P-VIM frameworks, synthesise individual value propositions and logic model/theory of change outcomes to determine an overarching value proposition, criteria and standards, and shared outcomes and evaluation criteria. This synthesis should be collaborative, respect the distinctiveness of each current, and focus on alignment rather than uniformity. The resulting CP-VIM should reflect both the diversity of ocean current and their collective contribution to good resource use, and sustainable, systemic, and societal outcomes.
- **Focus on system-level impact:** CP-VIM evaluations should aim to identify and support broader system-level changes - such as policy shifts, integration of services, cross-current and cross-agency collaboration - that drive broader population-level outcomes and value-for-investment. Key strategies may include:
 - Identify systemic patterns: For example, if multiple currents highlight barriers in workforce capability, this insight will inform integrated cross-agency workforce development strategies
 - Highlight interdependencies: Where initiatives complement each other (e.g., health and education currents), findings can support joint investment and shared/integrated service models
 - Inform policy briefs: Translate CP-VIM synthesis of collective impact and value for investment into clear recommendations for resource allocation, legislative adjustments, and/or service integration
 - Create cross-agency dashboards: Aggregate indicators from individual CP-VIM currents into a unified dashboard to monitor progress toward population-level outcomes and enable transparency and shared accountability.

Inevitably it is important to emphasise that effective system-level impacts rely heavily on three critical enablers:

1. **Cross-agency collaboration:** Strong commitment to a cross-agency way of working is essential. Respective agency teams require the capacity, capability, and willingness to

contribute to shared initiatives. This involves aligning on common goals, leveraging structured processes, and ensuring effective cross-agency communication and coordination.

2. **Shared commitment to new ways of working:** Agencies must adopt a unified approach, embedding new cross-agency ways of working that support CP-VIM objectives and desired system-level impacts. This requires a collective understanding of priorities and a culture of cooperation, underpinned by transparent communication between individuals and groups.
3. **Interoperability of Systems:** Technical systems must operate seamlessly together to enable efficient data exchange and integration. Achieving interoperability relies on adherence to common standards and protocols, and the P-VIM principle for data stewardship and digital ethics (see section 3), to ensure compatibility and reduce the need for manual intervention.

5. Conclusion

The P-VIM is designed for commissioning agencies, funders, and evaluators seeking a structured, evidence-informed and culturally grounded framework to strengthen commissioning models, service delivery, evaluation, and shared accountability. It serves as an ideal framework for agencies and funders by providing best-practice guidelines and principles for embedding Pacific values into every stage of the process - from investment planning to performance measurement, and evaluation design to assessment of outcomes and impacts. It is a technical and strategic necessity for delivering high-quality, future-focused, and accountable public services. It ensures operational consistency, strengthens evaluation, and positions agencies to meet the demands of an increasingly diverse population. By aligning investment and evaluation within a single model, the P-VIM enables funders, decision-makers, and evaluators to see the full picture of the value and societal impacts of initiatives – and influence sustainable change through systemic collaboration and continuous learning.

The P-VIM is the first unified framework to ground economic evaluation in Pacific values and connect resources to value creation in ways that matter for Pacific communities, agencies, and funders. It strengthens the link between investment and impact, ensuring investments are not only efficient but transformative and culturally resonant. Like the Value for Investment (Vfi) approach, P-VIM defines clear criteria (aspects of value) and standards (levels of value) that describe what good value looks like, providing a transparent basis for evidence-informed judgements. By integrating Pacific values, outcomes, and impacts within a single model, P-VIM guides collective efforts toward meaningful change and offers commissioning agencies a practical, culturally anchored framework for decision-making and accountability.

The P-VIM comprises four practical and progressive waves of activity:

- **Wave 1 - Prepare: Teu le vā** sets the P-VIM foundation by defining the purpose, scope and partnerships for initiatives and their evaluations. This ensures all partners have clear and shared understandings of their roles and obligations. Wave 1 emphasises building genuine partnerships and securing the necessary resources (institutional reports, data and information) to support the work ahead and engage culturally immersed and responsive evaluators to co-create the theory of change, intervention evaluation logic and monitoring and evaluation framework. By setting clear initiative and evaluation objectives and timelines, Wave 1 creates a shared understanding that guides the journey and ensures shared accountability from the outset.
- **Wave 2 – Design: Vfi** focuses on designing a value-for-investment evaluation approach that connects initiative intent and culturally grounded measures of value. By embedding Pacific methodologies and inclusive co-creation, Wave 2 develops the value proposition, criteria and standards that complement and expand the theory of change, and identifies required evidence that is both technically robust, transparent and culturally aligned to assess true value-for-investment (inclusive of both tangible outcomes and intangible benefits) for Pacific peoples, funders and agencies. This wave considers the strengths and limitations of different methods, for example, economic approaches may contribute to Vfi but are insufficient alone, while the IDI links administrative data across sectors yet presents limitations for Pacific data

and must be complemented by culturally responsive qualitative methods to safeguard integrity and use.

- **Wave 3 – Implement: Vfi evaluation** is where plans are put into action. It focuses on gathering credible evidence, analysing and interpreting it through culturally grounded lenses, triangulating and synthesising findings for depth and credibility and making transparent evaluative judgements using agreed criteria and standards. This phase ensures that data collection and analysis is ethical, protects Pacific peoples and Pacific data, addresses causality and attribution, and rigorously generates credible evidence and answers to key Vfi and evaluation questions.
- **Wave 4 – Inform: Tausi le vā** brings the P-VIM process full circle and focuses on translating findings into action through clear reporting and culturally respectful dissemination. This wave promotes accountability, empowers communities, supports decision-making, and informs policy and practice, strengthening relationships and driving meaningful and transformative change.

The P-VIM establishes clear accountabilities for a meaningful two-way relationship between agencies, funders, and providers, ensuring evaluation is relational as well as technical. It is grounded in Pacific values and the principle of *teu le vā* – prioritising relationships and genuine partnership. At the same time, agencies and funders often seek clarity and consistency in practice. P-VIM responds by offering evidence-based principles and standards that define what culturally responsive evaluation looks like, reducing ambiguity and promoting alignment across sectors.

The P-VIM is robust, evidence-based, and grounded in principles that ensure both cultural integrity and methodological rigour. Informed by Pacific scholarship and knowledge, and evaluation and value-for-investment best practice, the P-VIM provides a clear methodology for embedding values-based and evidence-driven principles into evaluation, commissioning, contracting, and performance measurement. Drawing on expertise across diverse sectors, P-VIM offers a holistic approach to assessing value. It goes beyond economic and financial metrics to evaluate cultural, social, relational, environmental, and economic dimensions, considering impacts across human, social, physical, financial, and natural capitals grounded in Pacific contexts.

The P-VIM delivers value across a diverse range of sectors providing a culturally grounded approach to assessing value-for-investment and informing decision-making. Its integrity is anchored in Pacific research methodologies and epistemologies that safeguard cultural authenticity. Just as Pacific cultures evolve while remaining true to their fundamental values, the P-VIM can be adapted to different policy and operational contexts. Its effectiveness, however, depends on maintaining its core guiding principles and foundations - grounding in Pacific values, cultural integrity and methodological rigour. Each P-VIM application must uphold these principles to meaningfully assess evaluation outcomes and both tangible and intangible value generated by initiatives for Pacific communities.

The P-VIM connects investment and evaluation as two sides of the same process, ensuring that resources deliver measurable true value and outcomes. For funders, delivering and demonstrating value beyond dollars is critical. The P-VIM enables this by capturing both economic, social and cultural impacts, providing a complete picture of value-for-investment. It can be used to move

funding decisions from activity-based to outcome-driven, demonstrate tangible results like economic impacts alongside intangible benefits such as social wellbeing and community resilience. This evidence strengthens accountability, informs smarter future investments, and positions funders as leaders in delivering measurable impact that truly matters.

The P-VIM can be applied to individual and cross-agency initiatives and offers an all-of-government framework to embed values-based and methodologically rigorous principles and practices, shared accountability and consistent standards into commissioning, service delivery, and evaluation.

Adopting P-VIM as an all-of-government framework would require strong leadership. structural alignment, specifically:

1. Leadership mandate, executive endorsement and clear policy direction to embed P-VIM into agency strategies and operational plans
2. Policy and commissioning integration to incorporate P-VIM principles into commissioning, procurement, and performance frameworks, and into agency plans to ensure consistency across systems
3. P-VIM training to equip agency staff, evaluators and providers to operationalise the model
4. Governance and accountability structures for oversight, and monitoring P-VIM adoption and impact to ensure accountability and transparency. This could include establishing a cross-agency ethical and cultural working group or community of practice to guide implementation of both P-VIM and CP-VIM. Such a group would uphold cultural integrity, provide advice on relational and ethical evaluation practices, and foster shared learning across agencies. It would also reinforce key principles such as *teu le vā* and Pacific data sovereignty within system-level evaluations.

Appendix 1: Pacific peoples - population and context

Pacific peoples - from migration to identity

In this report, the term “Pacific peoples” refers to those with heritage from the seven largest Pacific communities in New Zealand: Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, the Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau and Tuvalu (Ministry of Health, 2025). These groups are often described as sharing values such as collective responsibility, respect, family, community, spirituality and a holistic view of wellbeing (Spoonley, 2001).

At the same time, Pacific peoples is not a single or uniform category. Pacific identities are as diverse as the Pacific Ocean is vast, with experiences and identities shaped by factors including island of origin, migration history, generation in New Zealand, church affiliation and age (Anae, 2010; Spoonley, 2001). Other Pacific communities (such as Papua New Guinean and Solomon Islander peoples) are also present in New Zealand, though they are not included in the scope of this report.

Migration has played a central role in shaping Pacific populations in New Zealand. Pacific peoples have been part of New Zealand society for over a century, with the Cook Islands and Niue becoming New Zealand Territories in 1901, followed by Tokelau in 1925 (Thomsen, Shafiee and Russell, 2023). Large scale migration accelerated after the Second World War, when the New Zealand government introduced schemes to address labour shortages. Many young men from Samoa and Tonga were recruited in agriculture and forestry, while young women were employed in domestic work (Macpherson, Spoonley and Anae, 2001; New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2021). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, migration flows increased further during the New Zealand manufacturing boom, particularly from Samoa, Tonga and the Cook Islands. These movements help explain why these groups remain the largest Pacific populations in New Zealand today. At the same time, smaller communities such as Tokelauans, Niueans and Tuvaluans also established strong bases through family reunification and targeted schemes, even if their overall numbers remain smaller (Macpherson, Spoonley and Anae, 2001). These movements created strong, enduring Pacific communities in New Zealand.

Alongside these opportunities, migration history also includes hardship and discrimination. The economic downturn of the mid-1970s brought high unemployment and hostility, most visibly through the Dawn Raids of 1974-1976, which Anae (2012) has described as a blatantly racist attack. Structural changes in the labour market during the 1980s and 1990s further reduced secure employment opportunities, with long-term effects on Pacific wellbeing (Melville, 1998). Despite these challenges, Pacific peoples have demonstrated resilience and continue to be a defining part of New Zealand’s social fabric, now forming the largest Pacific population outside the islands themselves and making significant contributions to New Zealand’s economy, culture and identity (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2022).

Generational change has also shaped the development of Pacific communities in New Zealand. For the first generation of migrants, life was often centred on villages and churches, which provided essential social, cultural and spiritual support (Macpherson, Spoonley and Anae, 2001). While churches continue to play a significant role, younger generations are increasingly forming connections through a wider range of spaces, such as sports and youth groups, peer networks and

digital platforms such as social media. These evolving forms of connection reflect what Thomsen, Shafiee and Russell (2023) described as shifts in the Pacific “operating models”, illustrating both continuity with the values of earlier migrants and adaptation to new contexts in New Zealand.

For many, identity is expressed through their specific island heritage (for example, as Niuean or Tongan), while also extending to the wider collective identity of Pacific. These two often sit alongside each other: one grounded in cultural roots, language and traditions linked to a particular island, and the other reflecting shared experiences as Pacific communities in New Zealand (Anae, 2002; Mila-Schaaf, 2010). Both levels of identity are important and reflect principles of self-determination, where Pacific peoples define their own identities, and respect for community voice, which values how communities choose to represent themselves, rather than relying on externally imposed labels (Anae, 2010; Spoonley, 2001). The use of the term Pacific peoples has evolved over time. Once largely a label of political convenience, it is now more widely used as a way of recognising shared experiences in New Zealand, while still understood as a social and political construct rather than a singular cultural or geographic identity (Macpherson, 1996; Mila-Schaaf, 2010; Spoonley, 2001).

A dynamic, youthful, and diverse urban population driving future workforce growth

8.9% In 2023, Pacific peoples made up 8.9% of the New Zealand population, or 442,632 people. By 2043, the Pacific population in New Zealand is estimated to increase to 664,600 people and make up 11.2% of the total population (Ministry of Health, 2025).

The seven largest Pacific groups in New Zealand were Samoan (48.1%), Tongan (22.1%), Cook Islands (21.3%), Niuean (7.9%), Fijian (5.7%) and Tokelauan (2.2%)⁹. More than 40% of Pacific peoples identified with more than one ethnicity increasing from 37.2% in 2013 to 43.3% in 2023. In 2023, 32.7% of Pacific peoples aged under 15 also identified as Māori, reflecting the growing number of young people with shared Māori-Pacific heritage. Overall, 20.5% of Pacific peoples in New Zealand identified with both Māori and Pacific ethnicities

67.4% Most Pacific peoples (67.4%) were born in New Zealand, and among those born overseas, over 60% had lived in New Zealand for more than a decade.

Pacific peoples in New Zealand have a notably younger age profile than the overall population. This youthful profile contrasts with the ageing trend seen on the broader population. As New Zealand’s population ages, the working-age segment of the Pacific population is expected to grow significantly.

⁹ Percentages sum to more than 100% as many individuals identify with more than one Pacific identity.

Pacific		Total NZ population
24.9	Median age	38.1
50.1%	Under 25 years	31.4%



Most Pacific peoples live on the North Island, with the greatest concentration in Auckland (62.1%), Wellington (10.7%) and Waikato and Canterbury (5.9% and 5.4% respectively). Most Pacific peoples (93%) lived in an urban area, with those living rurally residing mainly in Waikato, Northland and Manawatū-Whanganui.

A religious and bilingual population shaping inclusive communities



In 2023, 65.1% of Pacific peoples in New Zealand identified with at least one religion, with Christianity being the predominant faith among them (63.1%). Tongans (74.5%) and Fijians (74.4%) reported the highest levels of religious affiliation within Pacific communities. However, the proportion of Pacific peoples with no religious affiliation has nearly doubled over the past two decades—from 14% in 2006 to 27% in 2023. Notably, Cook Islanders (45%) and Niueans (48.5%) had the highest rates of non-religious identification among Pacific ethnic groups.

40% Two out of five Pacific peoples were bilingual (38.8%) or multilingual (2.7%).

The number of speakers of Cook Islands Māori, Niuean, and Tokelauan languages has steadily declined compared to Samoan, Tongan, Fijian and Tuvaluan languages. The Ministry for Pacific Peoples observed a strong link between church attendance and the use of Pacific languages (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2020).

Stable families and interconnected households that strengthen social cohesion

Higher proportions of Pacific peoples identified their family type as Pacific couples with child(ren) (62%) compared to the total New Zealand population (56.2%). Higher proportions also reported living in multi-family households, with 18.2% residing in two-family households and 3% in three-family households, compared to the total New Zealand population (7.7% and 0.8%, respectively).

A population navigating social inequities while continuing to fuel New Zealand's economy

As demonstrated in the comparisons below, Pacific peoples in New Zealand often face socioeconomic disadvantages, marginalisation and higher rates of adverse outcomes in health, well-being, employment, education and other areas.

	Pacific	Europeans
Median personal annual income	\$24,300	\$34,500
Unemployment rate (June 2022)	5.4%	2.9%
School leavers with NCEA or above	76.2%	81.1%
Individual home ownership	21%	58%
Severe housing deprivation (per 10,000)	245.5	41.2
Dwellings lack basic amenities (disabled)	17.3%	5.6%
Dwellings lack basic amenities (not disabled)	9.7%	3.1%
% children living in material hardship	25.6%	7.6%

Note: Adapted from *Te Mana Ola: The Pacific Health Strategy* (Ministry of Health 2023, p. 32)

A key economic feature of Pacific families is remittances. According to the World Bank, New Zealand (mostly Pacific families living in New Zealand) sent \$2.4 billion in remittances overseas in 2017, with \$65 million to Samoa, \$55 million to Tonga and \$44 million to Fiji. As of May 2021, remittances as a share of GDP were estimated at 38% for Tonga and 19% for Samoa. Remittances, economic and

otherwise, are an important mechanism to keep families connected and social networks thriving as a social protection system for Pacific families both in the region and New Zealand (Ng Shiu, 2023).

As the Pacific population grows, their influence on New Zealand's well-being also increases. Pacific peoples have significant potential to contribute to the country's social and economic prosperity; therefore, challenges to their well-being are also likely to affect the well-being of all New Zealanders (Malatest International, 2024).

Despite experiencing considerable social inequities, Pacific peoples make substantial and diverse contributions to New Zealand's economy through business ownership, employment, GDP and household spending, and social and cultural capital. These contributions are increasingly recognised as critical to New Zealand's future growth and resilience (Nicholson Consulting, 2025; Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2020; New Zealand Treasury, 2018; Infometrics, 2025). Key contributions include:

- **Growth in Pacific-owned businesses and entrepreneurship:** Pacific entrepreneurship has grown strongly over the past decade. In 2023, there were 5,271 economically significant, private-for-profit Pacific businesses, comprising 3,555 Pacific-owned businesses (67%) and 1,716 sole traders (33%). This represents a 61% increase between 2013 and 2023, highlighting robust entrepreneurial activity within Pacific communities (Nicholson Consulting, 2025). Pacific-owned businesses are concentrated in Auckland, which is home to the largest Pacific population and serves as the hub of Pacific economic activity.
- **Employment and significant employers:** Businesses employing large numbers of Pacific workers play a vital role in the Pacific economy. In 2023, there were 4,242 significant employers of Pacific peoples nationally, with 2,676 located in Auckland. Auckland's proportion of significant employers (4.6%) is nearly double the national average (2.5%). Over the past decade, Auckland's significant employers grew from 1,221 in 2013 to 2,676 in 2023, reflecting increasing employment opportunities for Pacific peoples. Pacific ownership is strongly linked to employment: 42.7% of significant employers in Auckland were Pacific-owned, compared to 3.3% of all businesses with employees, up from 33.3% in 2013 (Nicholson Consulting, 2025).
- **Economic output and fiscal contributions:** Pacific-owned businesses make substantial contributions through employment, sales, and tax payments. In 2023, Pacific-owned businesses in Auckland generated \$1.798 billion in sales, employed approximately 11,100 unique employees in Auckland and 10,400 in the rest of New Zealand, and contributed \$103 million in net GST payments and \$67 million from businesses in the rest of the country (Nicholson Consulting, 2025). At a macro level, Pacific individuals and businesses contribute around \$8 billion annually to GDP, with Pacific workers earning \$6.6 billion in 2017 (about 6% of all income) and Pacific households spending an estimated \$10.4 billion, reinforcing their purchasing power (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2020; The Treasury, 2018).
- **Labour force and key industries:** Pacific peoples are a young and growing share of the labour force, making up a disproportionately high share of new labour market entrants. They are heavily represented in essential industries such as manufacturing, transport and warehousing, and administrative and support services. For example, Pacific peoples hold 13.8% of jobs in administrative and support services, 10.4% in transport/warehousing, and 9.3% in manufacturing, all higher than their overall employment share (Infometrics, 2025;

Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2020). These roles form part of the “backbone” of sectors that keep supply chains and basic services operating.

- **Demographic trends and future workforce:** Pacific peoples make up just over 8% of New Zealand’s population and are one of the youngest ethnic groups, meaning their share of the working-age population and total employment is projected to grow. This will increase their long-term importance to productivity and tax revenue. In regions such as Auckland and Porirua, the Pacific share of employment has risen markedly since 2000, reinforcing their role in regional labour markets and local economies. Government strategies emphasise that reducing inequities in education, health, and employment would unlock even greater economic contribution (Infometrics, 2025; Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2020; The Treasury, 2018).
- **Beyond GDP - Social and cultural value:** Treasury (2018) notes that GDP alone understates the full value of Pacific peoples, as it does not capture cultural capital, spiritual wellbeing, unpaid caregiving, volunteering, and community leadership that support social cohesion and intergenerational wellbeing. Pacific languages, cultures, and identities contribute to resilience, international linkages (especially with the wider Pacific region), and a diverse, innovative society and workforce. Strong family and church networks often provide informal welfare and support that reduce pressure on the state, enabling communities to manage hardship and maintain participation in work, education, and enterprise.

Overall, Pacific people’s contributions to New Zealand’s economy are multi-dimensional:

- Economic: through business growth, employment, GDP, and fiscal contributions.
- Labour: as a young, essential workforce in key industries.
- Social and cultural: through networks, language, and identity that strengthen resilience and innovation.

These contributions are projected to grow, making Pacific peoples central to New Zealand’s future prosperity (Nicholson Consulting, 2025; Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2020; The Treasury, 2018; Infometrics, 2025).

Appendix 2: Literature scan

Pacific research methodologies and practice frameworks

Understanding Pacific epistemology: How do we generate knowledge? Where and how do we learn, live, and apply it? Who teaches us, and what is its purpose? How do we understand and represent it - and what does it all mean? These foundational questions lie at the heart of Pacific epistemology. In an increasingly complex and globalised world, such inquiries are essential for revitalising, understanding, and disseminating Pacific knowledge systems.

Epistemology is the philosophical study of knowledge - its origins, nature, boundaries, methods, and justification. It interrogates what counts as knowledge, whose voice matters, and which ways of knowing are considered legitimate (Hofer & Pintrich, 2002). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue that qualitative researchers are guided by paradigms - sets of beliefs about epistemology, ontology, and methodology - that shape how research is conducted and interpreted.

Western epistemological frameworks have been criticised for their universalist and androcentric biases, particularly in relation to indigenous populations. Rooted in Anglo-European traditions, these frameworks often marginalise non-Western ways of knowing and doing (Smith, 1999). Historically, research on indigenous communities has been conducted by outsiders, contributing to a legacy of colonisation, exploitation, and epistemic dominance (Smith, 1999, 2005; Tamasese, 2005; Thaman, 2003).

Pacific scholars have responded by asserting the richness and legitimacy of indigenous Pacific epistemologies. Scholars such as Tamasese, Peteru and Waldegrave (1997), Gegeo (1998; 2001), Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo (2001), Meyer (2001), Nabalarua (2005), and Thaman (1997, 2003) have explored Pacific philosophies and frameworks to validate cultural ways of knowing that shape belief systems, behaviours, and actions. These scholars advocate for research that privileges indigenous voices, values, experiences, and reflections within their own temporal, spatial, and cultural contexts.

Understanding Pacific research methodologies and frameworks: Pacific research frameworks have emerged in direct response to this history. They are not simply alternatives to Western models, but expressions of Pacific worldviews - ways of knowing that are relational, spiritual, genealogical, and collective (Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001; Thaman, 2003). They emphasise that knowledge does not sit apart from people and place, but is woven through family, culture, land, and ocean (Hau'ofa, 1993; Meyer, 2001).

Pacific scholars have consistently argued that these ways of knowing deserve recognition on their own terms. Hau'ofa's (1993) description of the Pacific as "*a sea of islands*" reframed the region not as small or scattered, but as vast, connected, and dynamic. Meyer (2001) writes from a Hawaiian perspective: "*We simply see, hear, feel, taste, and smell the world differently.*" Such reflections remind us that Pacific knowledge systems bring distinct understandings of identity, belonging, and wellbeing that are not captured within Western paradigms (Macpherson, Spoonley & Anae, 2001; Subramani, 2001).

At the same time, Pacific research frameworks are forward-looking. They are designed to serve Pacific peoples today, whether in island nations or in diasporic communities (McGrath, 2002; Nabalarua, 2005). They seek to protect cultural integrity, but also to adapt, evolve, and respond to contemporary challenges. As Tupuola (1993) notes, the task is not for Pacific peoples to keep adjusting to outside models, but for academic and policy systems to learn to work with Pacific concepts and values.

In this sense, Pacific research frameworks offer practical tools for conducting research and also challenge assumptions about who defines knowledge, and for what purpose (Gegeo, 1998, 2001; Tualualelei & McFall-McCaffery, 2019). They make the case that Pacific peoples are best placed to articulate their own realities and aspirations.

These foundations lead directly to the frameworks and models described in the following sections. While each has its own cultural grounding, they share common commitments: to relationships, holistic wellbeing, reciprocity, care and protection, and to Pacific peoples' right to shape the knowledge that affects their lives. As Samoan scholar Tupuola (1993) put it:

It seems for too long I, like other non-Western researchers and peoples, have had to adopt and adapt to foreign concepts, structures and research frameworks. The time has come for the Western world of academia to change their way of thinking to accommodate Samoan and other non-Western research.

There are now many Pacific research and practice frameworks in use. This section focuses on and summarises the early, foundational models that paved the way for later frameworks developed by specific ethnic groups or tailored to particular contexts. These inaugural frameworks are the most widely published and applied, offering a strong evidence base for grounding Pacific research in Pacific ways of knowing, being, and doing. While newer models have built on these foundations, the fundamental cultural values remain constant - even as their application continues to evolve, much like culture itself.

Fa'afaletui: collective knowledge making

In 1997, Tamasese, Peteru and Waldegrave developed the fa'afaletui methodology premised on Samoan cultural underpinnings and collective knowledge-making. Fa'afaletui brings together different groups (*fale* or houses) to share and validate knowledge, with each offering its own perspective. These perspectives are often described as the view from:

- The mountaintop (the broad, high-level overview)
- The treetop (the connecting, intermediate view)
- The canoe (the lived experience).

Together, they create a more complete understanding of any given phenomena than any single view could provide. The fa'afaletui prioritises a way of thinking that reflects the heart of Samoan culture. At its core, it's all about relationships, and how we connect, respect, and understand each other.

Samoan authors Wendt (1991) and Anae (1999) have written extensively about the concept of *va*—the space between people that both separates and connects us. It refers to physical, emotional, spiritual, and cultural spaces where relationships live and breathe. In relation to this, Tamasese,

Peteru, and Waldegrave (1997) highlight two powerful contexts that shape how Samoans see themselves and others:

- Va fealoaloa’i - relationships built on mutual respect
- Va tapuia - sacred relationships that carry spiritual and cultural weight.

These concepts are woven into the fabric of identity - *fa’asinomaga* (identity), *tupuaga* (genealogy), and *tofiga* (roles and responsibilities), helping define one’s place in the world and their connection to others. Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Efi (cited in Tamasese, Peteru and Waldegrave, 1997) expands on this, showing how these relationships are rooted in mythology, spirituality, culture, and history. In other words, *fa’afaletui* isn’t just about gathering knowledge - it’s about honouring the stories, values, and wisdom that have been passed down through generations.

*I am not an individual,
I am an integral part of the cosmos.
I share divinity with my ancestors, the land, the seas and the skies.
I am not an individual because
I share a tofi with my family, my village, and my nation.
I belong to my family and my family belongs to me.
I belong to a village and my village belongs to me.
I belong to my nation and my nation belongs to me.
This is the essence of my sense of belonging.*

(Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Efi, cited: Tamasese, Peteru & Waldegrave, 1997)

Kakala: stages of knowledge gathering and sharing

The kakala framework (Thaman, 1997) is a vibrant expression of Pacific Indigenous knowledge, deeply rooted in the Tongan tradition of crafting kakala - a fragrant garland woven with intention, care and meaning. Each phase of making kakala mirrors a stage in the research journey, transforming the process into a culturally grounded act of creation and connection.

Phase	Meaning	Application for research/engagement
Teu	Preparation	Designing the research with clear intent and cultural sensitivity
Toli	Gathering	Collecting data, stories, or resources - like handpicking flowers for the garland
Tui	Weaving	Analysing and synthesising insights into a meaningful and coherent narrative
Luva	Gifting	Sharing findings or outcomes with the community in a spirit of respect and reciprocity
Mālie	Joy	Reflecting on how well the work was received - did it bring joy, understanding, or healing?
Māfana	Warmth	Evaluating the emotional and cultural impact - did it inspire or move people?

This framework is more than a sequence - it’s a philosophy. It invites researchers to move beyond data and into relationship, to listen deeply, and to give back meaningfully. Grounded in relational ethics, storytelling, and communal wisdom, the kakala framework is widely embraced across education, health, and social research in the Pacific and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Talanoa: dialogue that fosters trust and connection

Vaiolleti (2006) framed the Talanoa research methodology as a relational and participant-led framework that values face-to-face conversation, emotional resonance, and cultural authenticity. Talanoa is a culturally grounded approach developed by and for Pacific communities. It originates from the Tongan words *tala* (to tell) and *noa* (ordinary or without concealment) and promotes open, agenda-free conversation.

Talanoa challenges Western research paradigms by contextualising and prioritising Pacific epistemologies and:

- **Cultural relevance:** It reflects the oral traditions and communal knowledge-sharing practices of Pacific peoples, especially in Tonga, Samoa, and Fiji.
- **Empowerment and reciprocity:** Talanoa breaks down power imbalances between researcher and participant, fostering mutual respect and shared ownership of knowledge.
- **Emotional and spiritual connection:** It embraces *māfana* (warmth), *faka’apa’apa* (respect), and *mālie* (joy), creating space for deeper, more meaningful exchanges.
- **Decolonising research:** Talanoa allows Pacific communities to reclaim their narratives and conduct research that reflects their lived realities and cultural identities.

Researchers apply talanoa in various forms. For example, **talanoa vave** – quick, surface-level talk, and **talanoa faka’eke’eke** – deeper, interview-style conversation. It is widely used in education, health, social work, and community action and development both nationally and internationally. For example, Oldehaver (2018), developed a “*culturally validated dialogic indicator tool*” using the talanoa framework to analyse classroom talk. This author emphasised that:

- Talanoa offers a way to reconceptualise classroom dialogue through a Pacific lens, allowing for more inclusive and culturally responsive teaching
- Unlike traditional Western models that often overlook Pacific values, talanoa places relationality, reciprocity, and respect at the heart of learning - making it a powerful framework for engaging Pacific learners.

In a more recent study, Oldehaver (2018) explored how talanoa can elevate student voice. The findings were clear: when educators embraced talanoa-informed practices, students felt genuinely heard and valued. That sense of respect translated into stronger engagement and better learning outcomes.

Teu le vā: relational ethics

The phrase teu le vā means “to nurture the space” between people, emphasising relationships, respect, and reciprocity - not merely as cultural expressions, but as guiding principles for ethical engagement. This concept formed the cultural underpinnings for the *Pasifika Education Research Guidelines* (Anae et al., 2001) which highlighted the importance of ensuring inclusive relationships in the design, development and implementation of education research, policy and practice by and for Pacific peoples.

Central to the teu le vā guidelines are four relational contexts (*vā*) that shape ethical engagement and inform how educators, researchers, and institutions should interact with Pacific communities:

- Va fealoa’i – social relationships
- Va tapuia – sacred relationships
- Va feagai – reciprocal relationships
- Va nonofo – communal living relationships.

These relational spaces are deeply embedded in Pacific worldviews. Practicing teu le vā means actively nurturing these connections to foster culturally responsive research that honours Pacific identities and lived experiences.

Anae et al. (2001) also highlighted collaborative community engagements as essential in Pacific research, beginning with the selection of research questions and continuing through methodology and dissemination. These engagements are purposed to prioritise partnerships between Pacific researchers and communities and guide:

- **Research focus** – including culturally appropriate recruitment and protocols
- **Research design** – advising on questions, methods, sampling, data collection, analysis, language use, and translation
- **Ethical and practical issues** – offering support on interviewer matching, confidentiality, intellectual property, authorship, and community benefit.

A report entitled ‘Teu le vā relationships across research and policy in Pasifika education’ (Airini et al, 2010) reimagines Pacific education and research through the lens of relational ethics. Building on the seminal work of Anae et al. (2001), the report advocated for embedding the concept of teu le vā and the nurturing of relational spaces, into education systems. It recommended:

- Incorporating relational ethics into curriculum design, teacher training, and policy development
- Supporting Pacific researchers and educators to lead culturally grounded initiatives
- Fostering respectful partnerships between schools and Pacific families.

Tivaevae: collaborative storytelling and layered meaning

The tivaevae methodology, developed in 2001 by Teremoana Maua-Hodges is an indigenous Cook Islands research framework rooted in the cultural practice of tivaevae - the traditional art of quilt-making (as cited in Futter-Puati & Maua Hodges, 2019).

Tivaevae are rarely made alone - they’re crafted in groups, often by women working together in a spirit of unity and shared purpose. This communal process mirrors the collaborative nature of the tivaevae methodology, where research is not a solitary pursuit but a collective journey. Participants are co-creators of knowledge, not subjects of study. Their voices, experiences, and insights are stitched into the research fabric, ensuring that outcomes are meaningful, respectful, and rooted in lived realities. Key features include:

- **Relational ethics:** The methodology is underpinned by relational ethics, guided by culturally significant values such as aro’a (love), akapapa’anga (genealogical connection), and manaaki (care and hospitality). These principles shape the researcher’s conduct, emphasising respect, reciprocity, and accountability within interpersonal relationships. Ethical practice is

relational, requiring sensitivity to cultural protocols and practices and the maintenance of trust throughout the research journey.

- **Cultural storytelling:** Data within the tivaevae framework is conceptualised as individual patches that, when assembled, form a cohesive and meaningful narrative quilt. Qualitative talanoa is central to this process, allowing for the preservation of cultural context, emotional depth, and grounding in Cook Islands ways of being and doing. Rather than fragmenting knowledge into abstract categories, the methodology embraces narrative as a legitimate and powerful mode of inquiry and representation.
- **Spiritual and emotional depth:** The tivaevae methodology acknowledges the spiritual and emotional dimensions of research, guided by concepts such as vaerua ora (spiritual upliftment) and tapu (sacredness). Researchers are encouraged to approach their work with reverence, humility, and cultural sensitivity. The research space becomes one of reflection, healing, and transformation, where emotional wellbeing and spiritual integrity are integral to the process and its outcomes.

Health research guidelines: culturally safe and ethical research practices

The Pacific health research guidelines, developed by the Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC), were first published in 2005 and updated in 2014 to reflect evolving research needs and Pacific community aspirations. The guidelines are premised on underlying epistemologies relevant to Pacific cultures and emphasise the importance of inclusive and respectful relationships and connections between researchers and communities. As an overarching principle states:

“...relationships are the foundation of all ethical conduct...The centrality of relationships directly reflects a Pacific perspective...” (Health Research Council of New Zealand, 2005, p.1).

The guidelines were created to ensure that health research involving Pacific peoples prioritises Pacific worldviews and understandings. They promote culturally safe and ethical research practices that reflect Pacific values and empower Pacific communities to lead and shape research that affects their health and wellbeing, while strengthening partnerships between researchers and Pacific communities through meaningful engagement and shared decision-making.

These guidelines are based on key principles and conceptual themes which can be used as broad guides for researchers and participants:

Meaningful and reciprocal engagement: Meaningful engagement begins with relationships - genuine, reciprocal, and grounded in cultural understanding. These connections often stem from shared genealogies, histories, and cultural ties that foster a sense of belonging. But it doesn't stop there. Researchers must nurture these relationships throughout the entire journey by being transparent, honouring community values, and securing informed consent. Ongoing consultation is key - bringing in diverse voices ensures the research remains relevant, legitimate, and collectively owned. Respecting cultural protocols, such as traditional offerings or gifts, isn't just symbolic - it's foundational to building trust and affirming relationships.

Cultural sensitivity and respect: Pacific health research demands more than academic rigour - it calls for deep cultural sensitivity, recognising the diversity of worldviews, values, and social norms. Researchers must actively seek cultural briefings to avoid offense and ensure respectful engagement,

learning the nuances of local languages, symbols, and social dynamics. Methodologies must be shaped by community consultation and reflect Pacific cultural values. When Pacific peoples are collaborators - not just participants - the research becomes more meaningful, empowering, and impactful. It's about building capacity, fostering trust, and creating space for Pacific voices to lead.

Significance of Pacific people's knowledge: Pacific indigenous knowledge offers a holistic understanding and lens on health and healing within Pacific communities - one that deserves equal standing alongside Western paradigms. This knowledge is sacred and must be treated with care, requiring community consent and ethical stewardship. Research should aim to amplify these insights, inform policy, and empower communities to drive their own health outcomes through culturally grounded and inclusive approaches.

Linking health research to a social protection framework: Pacific health research must be sensitive to the social, economic, and cultural factors that shape health outcomes. By adopting a social protection framework - one that is gender-responsive and grounded in human rights - research can address structural inequalities and promote social justice. This approach, endorsed globally by organisations like the World Health Organisation (Commission on Social Determinants of Health, 2008), positions health research not just as an academic exercise but as a tool to improve the wellbeing of Pacific communities through inclusive, context-aware inquiry and policy development.

Non-maleficence - protecting Pacific communities: Pacific health research must uphold ethical principles of non-maleficence, beneficence, and informed consent. Researchers have a duty to avoid harm, protect cultural identity, and act with transparency. Benefits such as improved health outcomes and recognition of cultural knowledge - must be shared equitably. Prior, free, and informed consent ensures participants are empowered to make voluntary, well-informed decisions.

Balance between science and human dignity: Pacific health research must uphold human dignity, ensuring that scientific inquiry complements rather than overrides cultural values. Researchers should seek permission early, respecting diverse protocols across communities, and approach consent as a meaningful social contract. Communication methods should be tailored to individual and community preferences, with ethical responsibility guiding every interaction.

Respect for indigenous knowledge and genetic heritage is essential, recognising both intellectual property and cultural ownership. Researchers must avoid commodifying sacred knowledge and tissues and be aware of pressures that threaten communal identity. When collecting genetic materials, consent must be obtained from individuals, families, and *kinship* groups, acknowledging the spiritual significance of the body in Pacific cosmology.

To build trust, researchers must demonstrate competence, transparency, and cultural understanding. Including experienced Pacific researchers fosters capacity building and ensures ethical integrity. All research must undergo approval by relevant ethics committees to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of Pacific peoples.

Fonofale: interconnected dimensions of Pacific health and wellbeing

The fonofale model (Pulotu-Endemann, 2009) offers a powerful lens through which to understand the holistic nature of Pacific peoples' health and wellbeing, and a cultural blueprint that guides how health services should be designed and delivered to truly resonate with Pacific communities.

At the heart of the model is a Samoan fale (house), symbolising the person. Each part of the fale reflects a vital dimension of wellbeing:

- The Foundation (fa’avae) represents family and genealogy - the deep roots that connect individuals to their ancestors, titles, land, sea, and spiritual heritage.
- The Roof (falealuga) embodies cultural values and beliefs - dynamic, protective, and ever-evolving, they offer shelter and guidance in life.
- The Posts (pou) stand for spiritual, physical, emotional (mental) and other key aspects of wellbeing. These pillars link the foundation of family to the sheltering roof of culture, holding the person in balance.
- The Surrounding Space - environment, time, and context - reminds us that wellbeing is also shaped by external forces, from social conditions to historical and environmental realities.

Together, these elements form a holistic and interconnected view of health, where no single domain stands alone. For Pacific peoples, holistic wellbeing is achieved only when there is harmony across all aspects - family, culture, spirituality, physical health, and the world around them.

Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu: ethnic-specific conceptual frameworks

The Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu conceptual frameworks (Pasefika Proud, n.d.) are a powerful expression of Pacific epistemologies and knowledge systems, offering culturally grounded pathways to understand and address family violence across eight distinct Pacific cultures. These frameworks honour the deep cultural contexts, practices, institutions, and worldviews that shape Pacific families.

At the heart of each framework lies a commitment to authentic cultural values that uphold wellbeing, peace and harmony for families. These values are not abstract ideals; they are living principles that guide how families relate, heal, and thrive.

The Nga Vaka cultural frameworks¹⁰

Samoa - O Le Tōfā Mamao: In fa’aSāmoa, tōfā mamao is the deep, collective wisdom that nurtures peaceful relationships and community wellbeing. Rooted in love, compassion, and shared experience, it guides families to make thoughtful, inclusive decisions that support freedom, healing, and joy for all.

Tonga - Fofola e Fala Kae Talanoa e Kāinga: “Roll out the mats so the family can talk.” This powerful Tongan metaphor captures the heart of healing: open, respectful dialogue rooted in anga faka-Tonga (Tongan culture). By embracing cultural values that protect and uplift families, this strengths-based approach empowers Tongans to take ownership in ending violence. When these principles are lived out, harmful behaviour is transformed - and fāмили kaukaua mo kaukauola (strong, vibrant families) thrive once more.

Cook Islands – Turanga: The turanga framework envisions thriving households, families, and communities where Cook Island Māori live with dignity and balance. Everyone has the right to ora’anga meitaki - a good life - and the potential to reach ora’anga mou, a life fully lived. True wellbeing means harmony across physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Violence disrupts this balance, violating the sacredness (tapu) of all involved and disconnecting them from the shared path to wellbeing.

Niue - Koe Fakatupuolamoui he tau Magafaoa: Koe Fakatupuolamoui he tau Magafaoa is a Niuean framework designed to address family violence and support wellbeing for Niuean families in Aotearoa New Zealand. Meaning “to thrive vigorously and abundantly,” Fakatupuolamoui empowers families and practitioners to restore strength, resilience, and vibrant living.

¹⁰ <https://ngavaka.nz/cultural-frameworks/>

Tokelau - Kāiga Māopoopo: Kāiga Māopoopo envisions strong, unified Tokelau families where wellbeing, happiness, and protection are a shared right. Violence disrupts this harmony, leading to kāiga miha - a state of disconnection and loss of meaning. Also known as kaiga feālofani or kāiga filēmū, this concept calls for absolute unity to nurture peaceful, caring relationships across generations and communities.

Fiji - Vuvale Doka Sautu: Sautu represents the highest state of a Fijian vuvale - a family that is strong, harmonious, and thriving. This wellbeing is built on core values like respect (veivakarokoroko), honour (veidokai), listening (veirogorogoci), care (veikauwaitaki), and love (veilomani). It's like placing the Doka ni Vale - the crowning piece of a Fijian house - symbolising unity, strength, and the beauty of relationships lived well.

Tuvalu - Toku Fou Tiale: Toku Fou Tiale is Tuvalu's framework for healing and strengthening kaaiga (families). It begins by acknowledging fakasauaaga - violence within the family - as a disruption to wellbeing. In Tuvaluan society, kaaiga includes extended kin and shared households. When families function well, they create strong, healthy communities. But violence leads to kaaiga tupu taua - volatile families - breaking the harmony that holds everything together. This framework guides the path back to kaaiga ola filemu - peaceful, thriving family life

Kiribati - Boutokaan Te Mweeraoi: Boutokaan Te Mweeraoi means "supporting beams for wellbeing" - a framework rooted in Kiribati values that uplift home and community life. It draws strength from a healthy environment (marin abara), self-reliance (tetoronibwai), cultural practices (te katei), and respect (te karinerine). These pillars, lived through te utuu (family), te kaainga (extended kin), and te mwaneaba (community hall), shape te maiu raoi - a life of balance, dignity, and wellness.

Cultural values as the compass for change: The frameworks recognise that the solutions to family violence in Aotearoa New Zealand are already embedded within Pacific cultures. By promoting, teaching and embodying these values - among families, people affected by violence, and people who cause harm - conditions are created for respectful, resilient relationships.

Community-driven and expert-led: Developed by Pacific elders, frontline practitioners, clinicians, academics, and church ministers, these frameworks weave together cultural wisdom and evidence-based practice. They are mandated by the communities themselves, ensuring relevance, integrity, and impact.

A vision for vibrant Pacific families: In 2011, the Ministry of Social Development and the Pacific Advisory Group launched a bold initiative 'Pasifika Proud' to eliminate violence in Pacific families and communities. Guided by the Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu frameworks, this initiative represents a collaborative, culturally anchored movement toward healing, strength, and vibrant family life. One of the key Pasifika Proud initiatives '**Training for transformation**' embedded learnings from the frameworks to develop eight culturally responsive ethnic-specific training programmes to support ethnic-specific Pacific and non-Pacific practitioners and service providers, and anyone working with Pacific families affected by family harm. These programmes emphasise both the shared values across Pacific cultures and the unique nuances that must be respected in service delivery to ensure interventions are effective as well as culturally safe and empowering.

Summary - Pacific research and practice frameworks

Pacific frameworks and methodologies are woven together by a shared commitment to Pacific knowledge systems, relational ethics and holistic wellbeing. Although each is premised on ethnic-Pacific-specific and distinct cultural traditions, they resonate with common values and purpose. Together, these models form a rich tapestry of Pacific thought - each thread distinct, yet interwoven with shared values and prioritisation of:

- **Relationality and connection:** Emphasis is placed on the importance of relationships between individuals, families, communities and villages, and the environment. Teu le Vā means “to nurture the space between”, a Samoan concept that emphasises maintaining respectful relationships. While Talanoa is built on open, respectful dialogue. Fonofale and fa’afaletui centre sacred and secular relationships. This contextualises the fa’afaletui approach of weaving together perspectives from different “houses of knowledge”. Tivaevae and kakala are collaborative, creative processes that reflect collective values. Fonofale places family and cultural identity at the centre of wellbeing.
- **Holistic and cultural contextualisation:** The frameworks view wellbeing and knowledge as multidimensional—spiritual, emotional, physical, and social. For example, the fonofale uses the metaphor of a Samoan house to represent interconnected aspects of wellbeing. They are context-sensitive, meaning they adapt to the cultural, historical, and environmental realities of Pacific peoples.
- **Cultural integrity and identity:** Each framework is deeply grounded in Pacific cultural practices, metaphors and values such as faka’apa’apa (respect), alofa (love), va fealoa’i (relational space), and tapuaki (gratitude). They acknowledge individuals that exist within collectives and embrace the importance of sacred and secular relationships between individuals, families, communities and the land. The frameworks honour Pacific epistemologies, symbolism, and ancestral wisdom. The Pacific health research guidelines and Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu explicitly call for respectful, values-based engagement with Pacific communities. Kakala and tivaevae use traditional arts as metaphors for research and knowledge creation, just as Talanoa uses conversation and Teu le Vā uses relational ethics.
- **Pacific-centred intent:** The frameworks challenge dominant research and practice paradigms by prioritising Indigenous voices and knowledge. They promote culturally safe and community-led approaches to research, education, and health. The frameworks are not just methodologies or methods - they’re acts of cultural reclamation and resistance.
- **Collective empowerment:** The frameworks prioritise co-creation of knowledge with Pacific peoples, rather than extraction from them. They empower Pacific peoples to define their own realities, priorities, and solutions. The frameworks value reciprocity, respect, shared decision-making and intergenerational knowledge. Methods like talanoa and fa’afaletui are dialogic, inclusive and Pacific-centred. They prioritise collective reflection and co-construction of knowledge rather than extractive or top-down theorising.

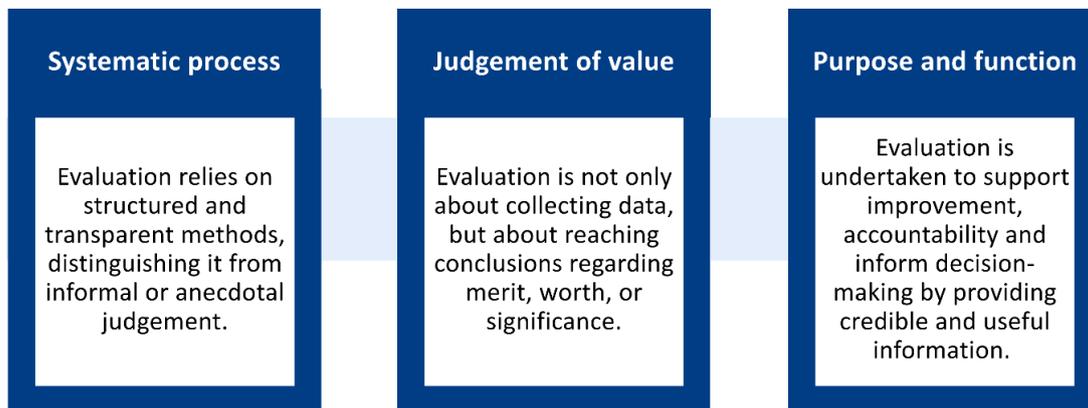
Evaluation best practice frameworks

Defining evaluation

The practice of evaluation is not new. One of the earliest illustrations can be found in the biblical account of creation in Genesis, where, after each stage of work, God “*saw that it was good*”. This reflection and judgement capture the central purpose of evaluation: considering what has been done, assessing its value and deciding how to proceed. In contemporary scholarship, evaluation has been defined in many ways, reflecting its application across diverse fields. Early voices, such as Scriven (1967), Stufflebeam (1971), Weiss (1972), Stake (1975), and House (1993), offered definitions

that continue to influence how evaluation is understood. Their work highlights evaluation as a systematic process, a means of making value judgements, and as a practice undertaken to improve programmes and support decision-making. Rossi et al. (2003) further anchored evaluation in applied social research traditions, emphasising its role in assessing the design, implementation and utility of social interventions.

Across this diverse body of work, three common elements can be identified:



Further, Shadish et al. (1991) argue that strong theories of evaluation should address five key components:

1. **Social programming:** Understanding how programmes function, the pressures and constraints they face and the role they play in wider social change.
2. **Knowledge construction:** Being clear about how knowledge is generated and how claims to knowledge are justified.
3. **Valuing:** Making explicit which outcomes matter most, whose values are recognised and how they should be weighted or balanced when findings are mixed.
4. **Use:** Recognising the different ways evaluation findings can be applied, when each type of use is most relevant and considering what evaluators can do to support meaningful uptake.
5. **Practice:** The concrete methods and techniques applied, including clarifying its purpose, the role of the evaluator, shaping the design and carrying out activities that support use.

Since then, a sixth component has been emphasised – **social justice**. This reflects growing recognition that evaluation should also consider equity, fairness and the distribution of benefits and burdens.

Although definitions differ across disciplines such as health, education, economics, and community development, the common thread is clear. Evaluation is a systematic, value-driven practice that both measures and judges, helping to shape decisions about what is working, what is not, and what should happen next (Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit, 2015; Stufflebeam and Coryn, 2014).

Theories of evaluation

Building on these definitions, academics have developed a range of evaluation theories that highlight different aspects of what evaluation should do and how it should be conducted. While all speak to Shadish et al.'s core components, each places greater emphasis on some elements than others.

- **Valuing** (Scriven, 1967). Scriven was one of the first to argue that evaluation must make explicit judgements about merit, worth and significance, rather than being limited to measurement. His work laid the foundation for “valuing” as a core function of evaluation.
- **Decision and management oriented** (Stufflebeam, 1971). Stufflebeam’s Context Input Process Product (CIPP) model frames evaluation as a tool for managers and policy makers to make better-informed decisions. It emphasises providing relevant, timely information to improve decision-making.
- **Theory-based** (Chen, 1990; Weiss, 1972). Weiss advanced evaluation as a theory-driven enterprise, leading to the widespread adoption of logic models and theories of change as tools for making causal assumptions explicit. By mapping the pathways through which interventions are expected to work, this approach supports testing and refining programme logic. Chen’s later work helped consolidate “theory-driven evaluation” as a distinct tradition.
- **Stakeholder-responsive** (Stake, 1975). Stake proposed that evaluation should respond directly to stakeholders’ concerns and contexts, emphasising qualitative methods, dialogue to negotiate meaning and responsiveness to diverse perspectives.
- **Use-focused** (Patton, 1978, 2011). Patton emphasised the importance of utilisation, arguing that evaluation should be designed with the intended users and uses in mind. This orientation highlights relationships, stakeholder engagement, and practical application of findings.

Logic model and Theory of Change: Logic models and theories of change sit most clearly within the theory-based school. They provide structured ways to articulate how programmes are expected to work by mapping inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). Their accessibility and clarity have made them widely adopted, but they can oversimplify complex systems and underplay contextual factors. For this reason, they are best seen as one tool among many, valuable when applied flexibly and critically.

A **logic model** is a visual map that shows how resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes are connected (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). It sets out the “if–then” logic of a programme: *if we invest certain inputs, then we can deliver specific activities, which in turn should produce outputs that contribute to outcomes* (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). Logic models are particularly helpful for clarifying what needs to be measured at each stage, and for communicating the structure of a programme in a simple, accessible way.

A **theory of change**, by contrast, provides a more comprehensive explanation of *how and why* change is expected to occur in a particular context. It includes not only the sequence of activities and outcomes but also the assumptions, conditions, and contextual factors that underpin them (Social Investment Agency [SIA], 2025). Developing a theory of change is as much a process as it is a product: it encourages stakeholders to reflect on their beliefs about change, to surface and test assumptions, and to identify risks and external influences (Ministry of Education, n.d.; Social Investment Agency, 2025).

The purpose of both tools is similar: they help clarify intervention logic, support programme design, guide the choice of indicators for monitoring and evaluation, and provide a framework for learning

and adaptation. They also serve as communication tools, making it easier to explain to funders, partners, and communities how an initiative is intended to work (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004; Social Investment Agency, 2025).

The relationship between the two is often described as complementary. Logic models typically provide a streamlined, often linear representation of the central pathway of change, while a theory of change explores more fully the assumptions and context that make those pathways plausible (Social Investment Agency, 2025). In practice, programmes may start with a logic model and then expand to a theory of change, or develop both in tandem, using them as living tools to guide reflection, evaluation, and improvement.

Evaluation in practice

Alongside theoretical perspectives, evaluation also takes a variety of practical forms depending on its purposes, timing and intended use. These types of evaluation provide different kinds of information, are often used in combination, and in practice are not mutually exclusive. A single evaluation may include formative elements to refine programme design, process evaluation to understand delivery and outcome evaluation to examine results, all while incorporating some consideration of cost and efficiency. Evaluation also employs a range of methods. These include qualitative approaches, which provide in-depth insights into experiences and contexts, and quantitative approaches, which support measurements of reach and outcomes. Increasingly, mixed-methods designs are adopted to combine the strengths of both (Table 2).

Table 2: Types of evaluation

Type of evaluation	Purpose	Key features
Formative	Improve programme design and delivery during development or early stages	Provides timely feedback; focuses on feasibility, acceptability, alignment with goals
Process / Implementation	Understand how a programme is delivered in practice	Examines fidelity, reach, barriers/enablers; highlights contextual influences
Outcome	Assess short- to medium-term results	Measures changes in participants, organisations, or systems
Impact	Assess longer-term and broader effects	Examines intended/unintended, positive/negative, and system-level changes; often causal claims
Developmental	Support innovation and adaptation in complex contexts	Provides real-time feedback; emphasises learning and adaptation
Economic (See section below)	Examine value for money and inform resource allocation	Compares costs and outcomes; highlights efficiency and trade-offs.

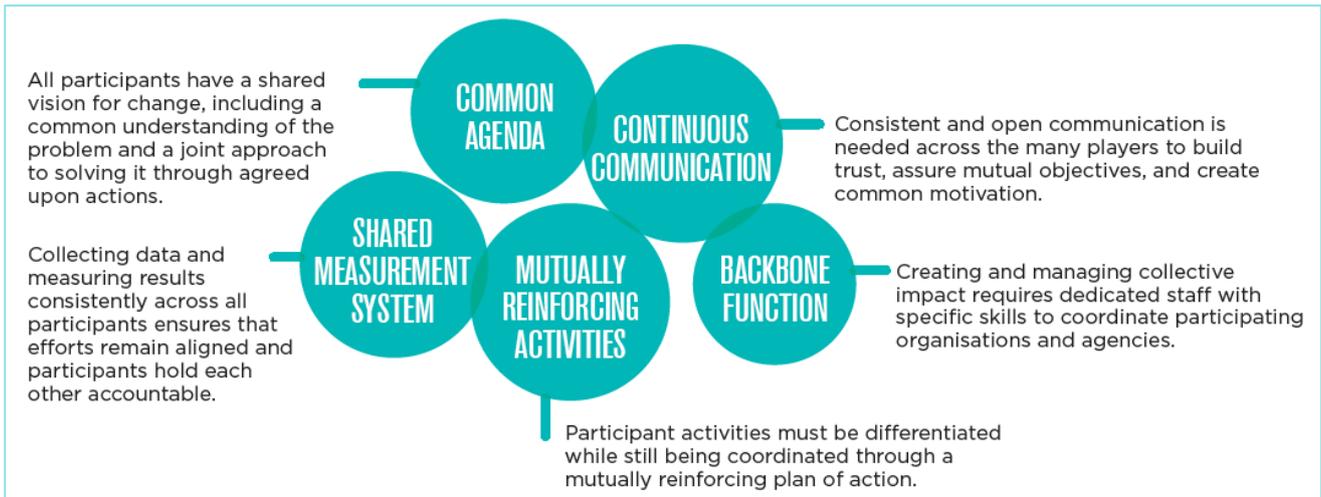
Modified from: (Weiss, 1998; Patton, 2011; OECD Development Assistance Committee, 2010).

Collective impact

While classical theories of evaluation offer important foundations, contemporary frameworks such as *Collective Impact* are also relevant. They illustrate how evaluation is adapted to address complex, multi-stakeholder initiatives (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Parkhurstis & Preskill, 2014; Smart, 2017).

Building on their original work, those who coined the term ‘collective impact’ have since refined it as *“a network of community members, organisations and institutions who advance equity by learning together, aligning and integrating their actions to achieve population and systems-level change”* (Kania et al., 2021). This refinement centres equity as the guiding principle, emphasises deeper engagement with community members as core actors and highlights the importance of shifting power and addressing structural barriers (Kania et al., 2021).

The original authors of collective impact identified five core conditions for executing collective impact effectively:



Note: Reproduced from *Collective impact: Evidence and implications for practice* (Smart, 2017), adapted from Preskill, Parkhurst, and Splansky Juster (2014).

Over time, lessons from implementing the collective impact approach in diverse contexts highlighted the need for additional direction, leading to the development of eight additional principles of practice to complement the original five (Collective Impact Forum, 2021). These are:

- Design and implement the initiative with a priority placed on **equity**
- Include **community members** in the collaborative
- Recruit and co-create with **cross-sector** partners
- Use data to continuously **learn, adapt, and improve**
- Cultivate leaders with unique **system leadership** skills
- Focus on programme and **system strategies**.

The OECD DAC evaluation criteria

While different types of evaluation highlight the range of approaches available in practice, international organisations have also sought to establish shared standards for what constitutes “good” evaluation. For example, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) first introduced a set of evaluation criteria in 1991. Initially, these comprised five criteria – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability – and were subsequently revised in 2018/2019, with a sixth criterion, coherency, added. The OECD criteria have gained widespread adoption for evaluation across international development and humanitarian programmes and

policies (OECD Development Assistance Committee, 2019). With their broad uptake across sectors and applicability to diverse contexts, the OECD criteria offer useful insights for developing a Pacific Economic Evaluation Framework that must also operate across multiple sectors and diverse Pacific contexts in New Zealand.

Each criterion provides a lens through which a programme can be assessed. Taken together, they offer a structured way of considering the outcomes achieved and the processes of design, delivery and adaptation.

Table 3: OECD DAC evaluation criteria definitions

Criterion	2019 OECD Definition	Key shift in definition revision
Relevance	<i>The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.</i>	Expanded to emphasise “beneficiary-centred needs”, rather than primarily aligning with funder/government priorities. Also adds adaptability to changing contexts.
Effectiveness	<i>The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.</i>	Broader scope to include “distributional effects” (equity, inclusion), not just achievement of stated objectives.
Efficiency	<i>The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.</i>	Goes beyond cost-benefit analysis to also consider timelines, adaptability and the quality of resource use.
Impact	<i>The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.</i>	Stronger emphasis on systems-level effects and the need to consider complexity and unintended consequences.
Sustainability	<i>The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue.</i>	Explicitly broadened to include environmental, social, institutional and financial dimensions of sustainability.
Coherence	<i>The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.</i>	New criterion added to address “systems thinking, linkages across interventions and alignment with broader policies”.

Source: (OECD Development Assistance Committee, 2019)

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (2019) also sets out principles for the use of these criteria:

- **Principle one:** The criteria should be applied thoughtfully and contextually, taking into account the nature of the programme, the purpose of the evaluation and the needs of stakeholders. Evaluation questions, what you want to find out and what you will do with the answers, should shape how the criteria are interpreted and applied.
- **Principle two:** Their application should not be mechanistic. The extent to which each criterion is emphasised depends on the evaluation’s purpose, the resources and time available, and methodological considerations such as data access. In some contexts, certain criteria may be prioritised over others or analysed in greater depth.

Evaluation standards and best practice principles

The ANZEA–Superu Evaluation Standards (Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association (ANZEA) & Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit (Superu), 2015) and the social investment approach provide a complementary foundation for evaluation best practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. The ANZEA–Superu Standards articulate *how* quality evaluation should be conducted - through principled, culturally grounded practice, while the social investment framework defines *why* evaluation matters and *to what end* evidence is used to inform investment decisions that improve lives through better social services (Social Investment Agency, 2019; The Treasury, 2022).

Together, ANZEA–Superu standards and social investment principles suggest that best practice evaluations in Aotearoa should be:

- Culturally grounded – responsive to Indigenous and Pacific worldviews;
- Relationship-centred and ethically robust – upholding respect, care, and integrity;
- Methodologically rigorous and transparent – guided by clear logic and evidence;
- Learning-oriented and useful – generating insights that inform adaptive delivery and investment decisions.

These align with wider government guidance on monitoring and evaluation (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet [DPMC] & Treasury, 2021; State Services Commission, 2018), and international good practice in theory of change and programme design.

ANZEA-Superu Evaluation Standards: These standards (Figure 6) were co-developed by ANZEA and the now defunct Superu, to set national expectations for evaluation processes, practices and products specific to Aotearoa New Zealand. The standards are grounded in integrity and framed by four principles: respectful meaningful relationships, ethic of care, responsive methodologies and trustworthy results, and competence. These principles explicitly embed Māori and Pacific values, recognising diverse worldviews and ethical responsibilities. The standards function as a principle-based “working philosophy of evaluation,” situated within a broader quality system that includes ethics and evaluator competencies (Figure 7) (Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association (ANZEA) & Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit., 2015; Vaoletti, 2006).

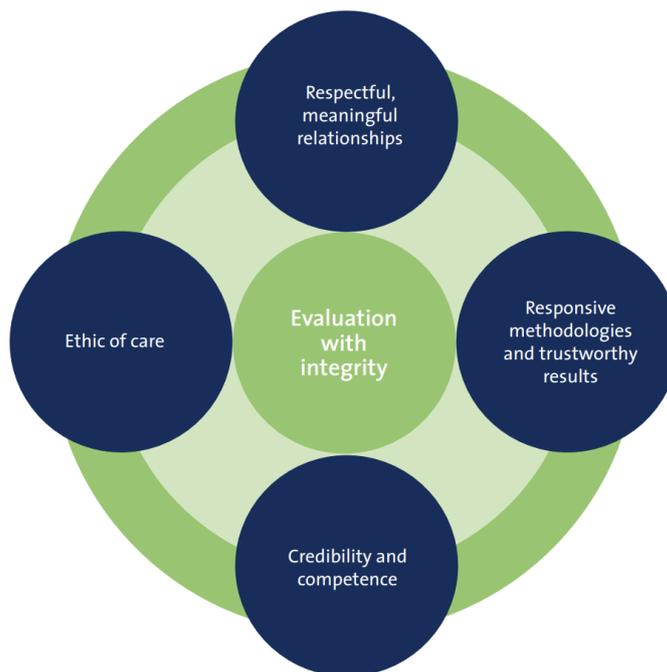


Figure 6: ANZEA-Superu standards framework

Respectful, meaningful relationships	Ethic of care	Responsive methodologies and trustworthy results	Competence and usefulness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships • Involvement • Communication • Negotiated accountabilities, resources and governance • Self-determination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care • Respect • Inclusion • Protection • Reciprocity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive • Systematic and robust • Evaluative validity and reasoning • Multicultural validity • Transparent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional competence • Independence and interdependence • Project management • Usefulness • Evaluation accountability

Figure 7: ANZEA-Superu principle-based evaluation standards

Social Investment approach and Social Investment Agency (SIA): Social investment is defined as improving people’s lives by applying rigorous, evidence-based investment practices to social services, with clear measurable goals and a focus on people who rely on public services. Core features include: using data and analytics to understand needs and current service use, systematically measuring effectiveness, reallocating resources to effective interventions, and investing early to prevent harm (The Treasury, 2022). More recently, the social investment approach emphasised the need to incorporate the voices of people experiencing change, partnering with external funders, and maintaining a long-term, politically durable approach. The Social Investment Agency positions evaluation and data integration as central to its practice. It provides technical evaluation support across design, measurement, and reporting, guided by frameworks assessing outcomes, theory of change, continuous learning, and community connectedness. SIA emphasises *transparency*, publishing methods and results to strengthen sector learning, while recognising that evaluation must be context-specific and grounded in relationships (Social Investment Agency, 2019, 2021).

Summary - evaluation best practice frameworks

- **Evaluation as a systematic, value-driven practice for social change:** Evaluation is a long-standing practice rooted in reflection and judgement, with early examples found in religious texts and foundational scholarship from figures like Scriven, Stufflebeam, Weiss, Stake, and House. Across disciplines, evaluation is consistently defined as a systematic process for making evaluative judgements and guiding decision-making. It serves to assess programme design, implementation, and impact, particularly within applied social research. Strong evaluation theory incorporates six key components: understanding social programming, constructing knowledge, valuing outcomes, promoting use, applying practical methods, and advancing social justice. Together, these elements position evaluation as a critical tool for learning, accountability, and equity - helping determine what works, what doesn't, and what should happen next.
- **Diverse evaluation theories and tools for purposeful practice:** Evaluation theory has evolved to reflect a range of perspectives on what evaluation should achieve and how it should be conducted, each building on Shadish et al.'s foundational components. Scriven emphasised *valuing*—making explicit judgements about merit and significance - while Stufflebeam's CIPP model positioned evaluation as a decision-support tool for managers and policymakers. Weiss and Chen advanced *theory-based* approaches, promoting logic models and theories of change to clarify causal pathways and guide programme design. Stake championed *stakeholder-responsive* evaluation, prioritising qualitative methods and contextual relevance, and Patton's *use-focused* model stressed designing evaluations with end-users in mind to ensure practical uptake. Logic models and theories of change, central to theory-based evaluation, are widely used to map programme logic and support learning, though they must be applied critically to avoid oversimplifying complex systems. Together, these theories and tools offer a rich, adaptable framework for conducting meaningful, context-sensitive evaluations that inform decision-making, foster engagement, and drive improvement.
- **Evaluation as a flexible, multi-purpose practice:** In practice, evaluation is a flexible and multi-dimensional activity shaped by its purpose, timing, and intended use. It often integrates various types - formative, process, outcome, and economic evaluation - within a single framework to refine design, assess delivery, measure impact, and consider efficiency.
- **Mixed-methods as a best practice approach:** Methodologically, evaluation draws on both qualitative and quantitative approaches, with mixed-methods designs increasingly used to harness the depth of contextual insights alongside measurable outcomes. This adaptability allows evaluation to respond to complex programme needs and support meaningful learning and improvement.
- **Collective Impact as an equity-centred evaluation approach:** Collective Impact offers a powerful framework for evaluating complex, multi-stakeholder initiatives by aligning diverse stakeholders around shared goals and system-level change. Originally defined by five core conditions - common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, backbone support, and continuous communication - the approach has evolved to prioritise equity, deepen community engagement, and address systemic and structural barriers.

- OECD criteria as a global benchmark for contextual evaluation:** The OECD evaluation criteria - relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and coherency - serve as internationally recognised standards for assessing programmes across development and humanitarian sectors. Widely adopted since their introduction in 1991 and refinement in 2018/2019, these criteria offer a structured yet flexible framework for evaluating outcomes and processes. It is important note, the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) emphasises that these criteria must be applied thoughtfully and contextually, shaped by the programme’s purpose, stakeholder needs, and available resources.
- Evaluation standards and best practice:** The ANZEA–Superu Evaluation Standards and the social investment approach together provide a strong foundation for evaluation best practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. The ANZEA–Superu Standards set national expectations for principled, culturally grounded evaluation, embedding Māori and Pacific values through principles of respect, care, responsiveness, and integrity. Complementing this, the social investment framework defines the purpose of evaluation - using evidence to guide investment decisions that improve lives through better social services. It emphasises rigorous measurement, data-driven insights, early intervention, and transparency, while incorporating lived experience and long-term, relationship-based approaches. Together, these frameworks promote evaluations that are culturally grounded, ethically robust, methodologically rigorous, and learning-oriented, aligning with government guidance and international good practice.

Pacific evaluation and policy frameworks

Evidence specific to Pacific evaluation approaches exists mostly in grey literature and technical reports commissioned by various government and other agencies. The literature included in this section is limited to technical reports available in the public domain, and includes evaluations conducted both in Aotearoa New Zealand and across the Pacific region over the past five years.

Evaluations that embed Pacific methodologies, cultural values, and relational approaches in the evaluation design

Pasifika Access and Choice – Primary mental health and addiction programme: Impact evaluation report (PwC, 2023). The Ministry of Health commissioned PwC to examine the short-term health and wellbeing outcomes for Pacific peoples following the implementation of the Pasifika Access and Choice programme. The first phase of the evaluation involved co-design of the evaluation framework with Pacific providers and the Ministry of Health, to ground the evaluation approach in Pacific values, worldviews, and community priorities to ensure cultural relevance and responsiveness. A mixed-methods approach was employed, incorporating *talanoa*-based interviews with provider leaders and staff, alongside quantitative surveys of staff and clients, to generate credible, culturally informed insights that can guide future policy and service delivery.

Sorted Pacific Peoples Pathways to Home Ownership (PPPH) Programme – Evaluation report (MacDonald, Tuifagalele & Bright, 2022). With funding from the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Te Ara Ahunga Ora commissioned the New Zealand Council for Educational Research to evaluate the PPPH programme over successive years. This initial phase of the evaluation, aimed to assess whether the

PPPH programme was being delivered as intended and to gather early insights into its quality and impact. The evaluation was firmly grounded in Pacific values - reciprocity, respect, inclusion, spirituality, relationships, communality, leadership, and love. These values were not only acknowledged but actively embedded throughout the process: from the criteria used to assess effectiveness, to the design of interview questions, and the culturally respectful ways participants were invited to engage. The use of *talanoa* ensured that diverse Pacific worldviews and knowledge systems were honoured.

The methodology combined Pacific research approaches with Michael Quinn Patton's utilisation-focused evaluation model, which emphasises adaptive decision-making and the practical use of findings by intended users. A co-designed evaluation framework was developed in partnership with the Te Ara Ahunga Ora Sorted PPPH team, ensuring alignment with their information needs, stakeholder priorities, and definitions of credible evidence.

New Zealand Rugby (NZR) Pasifika Strategy Assessment Report (New Zealand Rugby & Moana Connect, 2022): NZR commissioned Moana Connect to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess how effectively their Pacific Strategy is being implemented, and to identify areas for improvement. The evaluation framework is being developed in stages to ensure comprehensive assessment and consultation. This report focused on stage one which consisted of a desktop review of key documentation and consultation findings across NZR. This information explored the rationalisation for goals outlined in the Pacific Strategy, assessed alignment with other NZR strategies such as the Strategy 2025 and the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan, and identified relevant evaluation framework components for each goal. Stage 2 is intended to identify evaluation approaches, measures and data sources which will be reviewed and refined following consultation with Pacific communities.

Pasifika Proud – Formative evaluation of Pacific faith-based family violence services (Alefaio-Tugia, & Havea, 2016): The Ministry of Social Development commissioned Dr. Siautu Alefaio-Tugia & Sesimani Havea to evaluate two Pacific faith-based initiatives designed to address family violence in Aotearoa New Zealand through culturally grounded, faith-driven approaches. The evaluation used a cultural collaboration approach and partnered with families, Church ministers/Pastors, faith-based service leaders and MSD to review and reflect on how the services evolved. This included relational engagement, cultural-participatory immersion, *talanoa* (Pacific-style discussions), document analysis and *fa'afaletui*-dialectical analysis (assessing the truth of a theory). As described in the Pacific research methodologies section above, the *fa'afaletui* ensures multiple layers of knowledge are respected and integrated, enhancing the authenticity and relevance of findings. The dialectical aspect refers to engaging in critical dialogue across perspectives, navigating contradictions and tension to arrive at deeper understanding.

[Evaluations that amalgamate Pacific research methodologies and international evaluation criteria and standards](#)

Ministry of Education – Evaluation of the Pacific Education Support and Innovation Funds: Final Interim Report (Malatest International, 2022). Malatest International (now trading as TIRIA) conducted an interim evaluation of the Support and Innovation funding streams under New Zealand's Action Plan for Pacific Education (2020) - the first in a series of formative, process, and

outcomes reports delivered between 2021 and 2023. The evaluation was grounded in Pacific research methodologies and wove together insights from the Action Plan, the Ministry of Education’s logic model, teu le vā stakeholder interviews, and document reviews to develop a logic model and evaluation framework. The evaluation framework was further reviewed and refined with Pacific providers and included core domains aligned with the OECD evaluation criteria (detailed above), as well as standard and bespoke tools for capturing experiences, processes, and outcomes by and for Pacific peoples.

Malatest International (now trading as TIRIA) conducted an interim evaluation of the Support and Innovation funding streams under New Zealand’s Action Plan for Pacific Education (2020) - the first in a series of formative, process, and outcomes reports delivered between 2021 and 2023. The evaluation was grounded in Pacific research methodologies and wove together individual strands of knowledge gathered from diverse stakeholder perspectives at different points in time throughout the life of the multi-year evaluation. For example, a logic model and evaluation framework were developed based on insights from the Action Plan, the Ministry of Education’s logic model, teu le vā stakeholder interviews, and document reviews. The evaluation framework was further reviewed and refined with Pacific providers and included core domains aligned with the OECD evaluation criteria (detailed above), as well as standard and bespoke tools for capturing experiences, processes, and outcomes by and for Pacific peoples. Data sources included initial and follow-up talanoa with government agencies, providers, students and their families; case studies and in-depth examples and understandings of diverse projects across different regions targeting different groups of Pacific learners, analysis of provider administrative data (incl. narrative reports) and ongoing consultation with Pacific providers through sense-making workshops and discussions of preliminary findings. Together, these perspectives provided a collective fabric of insights to evidence the holistic impact of the funding streams on Pacific providers, learners and their families, and opportunities to strengthen regional and national processes for managing the funds.

It is important to note that publicly available evaluations by Malatest International (now TIRIA) represent a small subset of their broader work, primarily focused on Pacific, Māori, and general population projects (many of which include Pacific participants). Pacific-specific evaluations amalgamate Pacific research methodologies with evaluation best practices across design, implementation, analysis, and reporting. More general evaluations also incorporate Pacific approaches alongside Kaupapa Māori and Western evaluative methods to ensure inclusive representation.

One of Malatest’s Pacific evaluations promotes the use of a collective impact lens to enhance logic models or theories of change and position individual initiatives within a broader network of interconnected (and often siloed) efforts attempting to achieve the same or similar outcomes. Drawing inspiration from Polotu-Endemann’s fonofale model, a Pacific evaluation fale was developed: the floor represents inputs for the initiative being evaluated, the pou (pillars) reflect activities and outcomes across various initiatives (including the one being evaluated). The roof captures individual initiative outcomes and collective societal impacts if/when all initiatives are combined. This model clarifies scope for the initiative being evaluated and highlights the interdependence of all pou (initiatives) in achieving meaningful and collective societal impact. It

may also be used to illustrate the collective impact of several activities (represented by each pou) within one initiative.

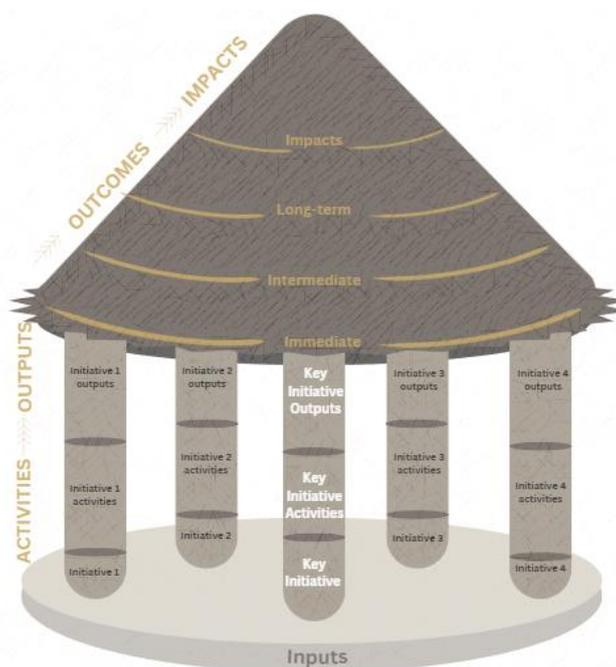


Figure 8: Malatest International - Pacific Evaluation Fale

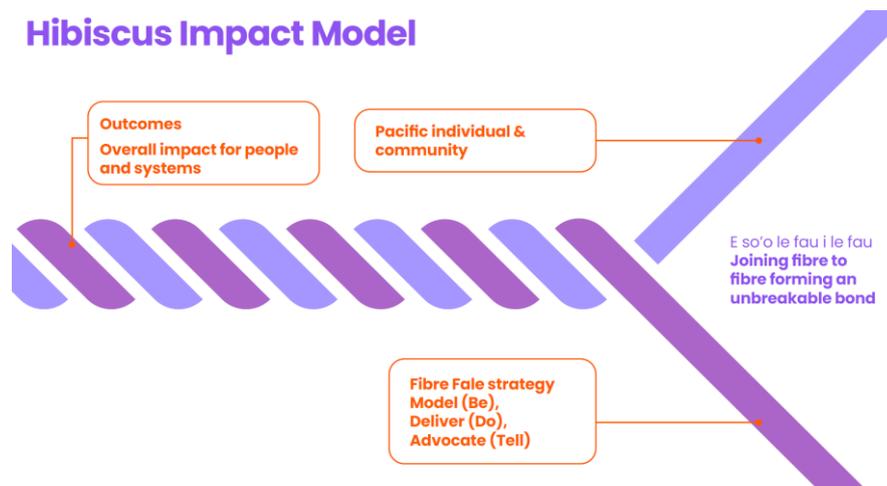
Pasefika Proud – Formative evaluation of Pacific provider-based family violence services (Integrity Professionals Limited, 2016): The Ministry of Social Development commissioned Integrity Professionals Limited (IPRO) to explore the delivery of four Pacific family violence services. The evaluation used mixed methods and respected Pacific ways of knowing and doing, including the use of talanoa (dialogue) and community engagement with four Pacific providers. One of the evaluation’s objectives was to reflect back to providers on their use of cultural frameworks and identify best and safe practices. This aligned with Pacific research principles that emphasise reciprocity, respect, and relational accountability. Inclusion of an extensive literature review ensured the evaluation was culturally grounded, methodologically sound, and practically useful. Rubrics were developed with providers to assess each of the Pacific family violence programmes across what appear to be five core dimensions grounded in cultural and service delivery principles.

Dimension	Focus
Cultural alignment	How well the programme reflects Pacific values and Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu
Safe practice	Ensuring physical, emotions, and cultural safety for participants
Participant transformation	Evidence of change in attitudes, behaviours and relationships
Service delivery	Effectiveness of programme structure, facilitation and engagement
Reflective practice	Provider’s ability to self-assess, adapt and improve

Each dimension was assessed qualitatively and often described in terms like:

- **Emerging** – foundational elements present but not yet consistent
- **Developing** – practices are becoming embedded, with growing impact
- **Established** – strong alignment and consistent delivery
- **Transformative** – exemplary practice with clear, sustained outcomes.

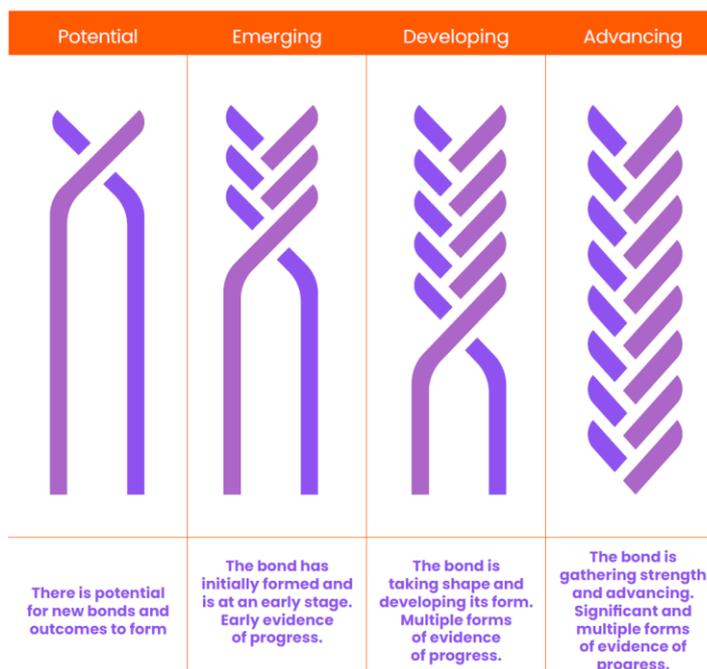
Ancestral Intelligence (AI) is the future: Fibre Fale Impact Report (Fibre Fale, 2025). The report showcases Fibre Fale’s mission to empower Pacific peoples in technology through a cultural and intergenerational lens – using the Hibiscus Impact Model to describe and assess progress toward their impact journey.



Source: Fibrefale, 2025.

1. The first fau or fibre represents Fibre Fale as a system - its strategy, activity and relationships, partnerships, power and influence, resources, practices and mindsets.
2. The second fau is Pacific individuals in tech and the Pacific community and all that they bring.
3. The so’o or process of joining these two fau together creates bonds or outcomes at individual, community and system levels.
4. This joining occurs within a wider context and ecosystem, which includes government, industry, funders, localities, national and global forces.

The Hibiscus model included a progress rating scale to assess progress against key outcome areas. Progressions in the rating scale were represented by two interweaving fau (fibres) which illustrated the strength and quality of the bond between Fibre Fale and the Pacific tech community, and level of progress achieved in the early stages of implementation.



Source: Fibrefale, 2025.

Kua Ea Te Whakangao: Māori & Pacific Education Initiative - Value for investment evaluation report (Kinnect Group and Foundation North, 2016):

This evaluation assessed the impact of Foundation North’s \$20 million investment in innovative, community-led education projects purposed to address *the serious problem of chronic educational underachievement among Māori and Pacific 3 young people*. The Kinnect Group was engaged to provide a multi-year evaluation of the initiative that focused on the value of the overall investment, the effectiveness of each of the projects and learning about high engagement investing with Māori and Pacific communities. The evaluation employed a culturally responsive, mixed-methods approach that combined developmental evaluation, kaupapa Māori and Pacific methodologies, and value-for-investment analysis. Evaluators worked closely with providers using relational methods like *talanoa* and *whakawhanaungatanga*, ensuring that community voices shaped the process. Data collection included both quantitative metrics (e.g. educational outcomes) and qualitative insights (e.g. interviews, case studies), all mapped against a co-developed theory of change. The value-for-investment framework assessed not just financial returns, but also social, cultural, and educational impact, capturing the full spectrum of benefits delivered by these community-led initiatives.

An evaluative rubric was also developed in consultation with Foundation North staff and Trustees which provided clear criteria for assessing the effectiveness and value of the initiative across various performance levels, ranging from "Highly effective" to "Ineffective." The rubric included criteria such as:

- Educational outcomes
- Value to families and communities
- Validation of cultural elements
- Influence on education policy and philanthropy
- Sustainability and spread of successful models.



The rubric also incorporated a framework for educational outcomes, which included improvements in areas such as cultural confidence, family engagement, student attitudes, retention, literacy, numeracy, academic achievement, and employment or further education opportunities. This structured approach helped ensure that the evaluation was systematic, credible, and useful for informing future decisions.

Evaluations focused on the Pacific region

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade have commissioned many Pacific-region focused evaluations. A small and random selection of evaluation reports from the last three years are summarised below.

Independent evaluation of the Public Service Fale (Martin Jenkins, 2025a, 2005b). Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission (TKM) engaged Martin Jenkins to carry out an independent evaluation of the Public Service Fale (the Fale), a programme funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). The Fale operates as a centre of excellence, supporting public service leaders and their agencies across sixteen Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs): Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

The evaluation examined the Fale's actions and responsiveness to mid-term review recommendations, assessed its impact and contribution to its overarching goal, and identified opportunities to strengthen future impact. Methods included a review of key programme documents, an online survey of senior leaders and former Commissioners (n=29 across 16 countries), and engagement with Pacific Public Service Commissioners, stakeholders, Fale team members, MFAT representatives, and partner agencies. A steering group comprising Fale and MFAT representatives provided oversight, and sense-making workshops were held with the group to validate findings.

Vanuatu Strategic Evaluation 2015-2023 Evaluation Report (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2024). MFAT commissioned Tetra Tech International Development to evaluate and assess the quality and effectiveness of New Zealand's engagement in Vanuatu from 2015 to 2023. It examined how well the Country Programme delivered against its Four-Year Plan goals, the strength of partnerships with government and civil society, and the coherence of interventions. It also explored governance dynamics and identified strategic opportunities for future engagement aligned with Vanuatu's priorities and New Zealand's interests.

A mixed-methods approach combined document review, Political Economy Analysis, and stakeholder interviews. Key informant discussions included Vanuatu government officials, civil society representatives, donor partners, and New Zealand staff. An online survey and ratings from Activity Monitoring and Completion Assessments provided quantitative insights. Triangulation of data and sense-making workshops ensured findings credible and contextually relevant.

Evaluation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade's Cook Islands Programme 2015-21 (Future Partners, 2023). MFAT commissioned Future Partners International Development to assess the delivery and performance of its Cook Islands Programme and contribution to Cook Islands' development priorities. The evaluation sought to determine how effectively the programme delivered on its objectives under the 2015–18 Joint Commitment for Development and the 2018–21

Four-Year Plan. It aimed to assess the programme's impact on development outcomes, including economic sustainability, governance capacity, and the strength of the bilateral relationship between New Zealand and the Cook Islands. The evaluation also examined the relevance and alignment of MFAT's support with national priorities, the coherence and quality of delivery, and the effectiveness of funding modalities such as budget support. A further focus was on sustainability and resilience, considering institutional capacity and risks related to climate change and fiscal pressures. Findings were intended to inform future programme design and strengthen strategic decision-making.

A mixed-methods approach was used, combining qualitative and quantitative data to ensure robust and credible findings. The evaluation was guided by Key Evaluation Questions aligned with OECD-DAC and Paris Declaration principles, focusing on effectiveness, impact, delivery quality, and sustainability. Data collection included a comprehensive desk review of programme documents, financial records, and policy frameworks, alongside a 10-day field mission in 2023. During this mission, evaluators conducted approximately 60 interviews with stakeholders, including Cook Islands Government officials, New Zealand High Commission staff, civil society representatives, private sector actors, and New Zealand agencies. Interviews were held both in person and via Zoom to maximise participation. The process was participatory, engaging stakeholders in validation discussions, and applied internationally recognised standards for aid effectiveness to assess relevance, alignment, coherence, efficiency, and sustainability.

Evaluation of the Strengthening Pacific Labour Mobility Programme - 2017-2022 (Allen & Clarke, 2022). MFAT commissioned Allen and Clarke Consulting to evaluate the Strengthening Pacific Labour Mobility Programme which supports nine Pacific Island countries to gain economic and social benefits from remittances and skills by building labour mobility capacity. The evaluation aimed to assess the programme's effectiveness in delivering its intended outcomes and strategic goals by supporting labour mobility. It sought to evaluate how well it achieved economic and social benefits through remittances and skills building, and to determine its relevance to New Zealand's and Pacific nations' broader labour mobility policies. Key objectives included examining the programme's efficiency in converting inputs into outputs, and informing future design with recommendations to enhance institutional capacity, partnerships, system flexibility, and stakeholder roles - including those of MFAT and MBIE.

The evaluation employed a mixed-methods, culturally responsive approach across several stages. It began with a comprehensive desk review of strategic documents, annual reports, Memoranda of Understanding, and related literature. Between June and August 2022, the team conducted semi-structured interviews with over 60 stakeholders—including MFAT, MBIE, fisheries and RSE officials, Labour Sending Units, employers, regional bodies, NGOs, workers, and their families—via in-person sessions, videoconference, and culturally appropriate formats (e.g., talanoa and maroro). Additionally, three in-depth case studies were carried out in Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Kiribati, varying in scope to reflect each country's labour mobility scale. Interview data were triangulated with document analysis through thematic coding, ensuring impartiality, credibility, and stakeholder engagement. The evaluation was guided by Key Evaluation Questions addressing effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and future design, and incorporated Pacific research principles and cultural sensitivity throughout. It included Pacific evaluators from Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Samoa, ensuring cultural insight and respectful engagement. Methods were adapted to local contexts, using

talanoa in Samoa and maroro in Kiribati to foster open, relational dialogue. Reciprocity was demonstrated through koha for non-government participants, and consent processes were transparent and participatory.

Summary - Pacific evaluation and policy frameworks

While some Pacific evaluations merely acknowledge Pacific research and practice methodologies and ways of being and doing, others are guided by and embed them meaningfully across all phases by co-creating theories of change, logic models and frameworks with Pacific communities and blending diverse evaluation theories into culturally responsive designs. TIRIA and some MFAT Pacific evaluations extended culturally responsive utility, accountability and relevance into their approaches by including agency responses on how evaluative insights and findings would be used.

Overall, Pacific-led and informed evaluation designs demonstrated a consistent commitment to Pacific values and culturally grounded inquiry, and highlighted the importance of:

Co-creation with Pacific communities: Most evaluations began with intentional co-creation processes involving Pacific providers, leaders, or communities to ensure cultural relevance and responsiveness.

Talanoa as a core methodology: Most evaluations used talanoa-based interviews and discussions which were central to gathering authentic, relational, and culturally informed insights.

Pacific values embedded throughout: Values such as reciprocity, respect, spirituality, and love were not just acknowledged - they shaped evaluation criteria, engagement protocols, and data interpretation.

Convergent methodologies: Evaluations amalgamated Pacific research and practice frameworks with Western models like Michael Quinn Patton's utilisation-focused evaluation and the OECD evaluation criteria, ensuring findings were both culturally and methodologically credible and practically useful.

Relational accountability and utility: Evaluators prioritised relationships, trust, and communal knowledge systems, using approaches like fa'afaletui to integrate multiple layers of truth and perspective. As noted above TIRIA and MFAT evaluations included a response from funders about how the findings would be used and/or included agency responses to the findings in the report. This is an important final step to encourage and ensure utility and commitment to the Pacific voices represented.

Economic evaluation, Value-for-Investment and Pacific Living Standards frameworks

Economic evaluation – theory, concepts and methods

Economic evaluation is a particular form of assessment within the broader sphere of evaluation. It draws on a range of underlying theories, principles and concepts, each with their own apparatus.

The main goal of economic evaluation is to assess the extent to which an activity, intervention or investment is 'justified' or 'worthy'. In the most common cases where economic evaluation is used,

the perspective applied with respect to justification is societal. That is, to what degree is society made better off (if at all) from the activity, intervention or investment?¹¹

Economic evaluation can be either before implementation (*ex-ante*) or after implementation (*ex post*). The former is usually associated with funding decisions (i.e., is the proposal worthy of funding?), while the latter is often focused on continuation or expansion of a programme or initiative (i.e. was the initiative an effective use of resources?).

Relevant economic theory: Economic efficiency is at the heart of economic evaluation. In broad terms, economic efficiency means society is at its optimal state, allocating scarce resources to their highest value uses, minimising waste and maximising welfare or output. To move away from such a state would involve negative consequences for at least some part of society.¹²

There are three forms of economic efficiency:

- Technical (or productive) efficiency - essentially least-cost production of outputs
- Allocative efficiency – resources are directed to their highest value use or to areas of greatest need
- Dynamic efficiency – the ability to adapt to change, support innovation and remain fit-for-purpose over time.

Different perspectives on factors of interest: There are basically two perspectives relevant to economic evaluation. The first is commonly referred to as “economic impact assessment” (EIA). EIA involves assessing interventions or initiatives in terms of their effect on well-known economic aggregates such as Gross Domestic Product, income and employment. EIA is concerned with economic activity and does not directly account for the costs of the intervention or initiative in reporting metrics.

On the other hand, economic evaluation can be “resource-based” and include a cost perspective. The most common evaluation method of this type is cost benefit analysis (CBA). This perspective is based on economic welfare rather than just economic activity, where welfare is calculated as the difference between the costs of the intervention or activity and its benefit or gain (i.e. its worthiness).

In terms of the description of economic efficiency above, resource-based approaches tend to be favoured. Further description of economic evaluation methods is set out below.

Methods: Table 4 summarises a range of different economic evaluation methods. All of the methods value costs in monetary units (usually in dollars). All of the methods adjust the value of costs and

¹¹ We refer here to the public policy/government spending realm, though do acknowledge that private firms use economic evaluation tools and techniques for specific investments where the company’s individual metrics (e.g. return on investment, internal rate of return, economic surplus/profit) are the focus.

¹² This state is often referred to as Pareto efficiency or Pareto optimality. However, it is important to note that in practical policy analysis, Kaldor-Hicks efficiency is the more commonly applied concept, and VfI deliberately goes beyond both by integrating explicit value judgements, equity, and non-monetised value.

consequences according to their timing (a process called discounted cashflow analysis). They differ in the way they measure consequences.¹³

Economic evaluation methods can be employed on an *ex-ante* basis (i.e. prior to full proposal implementation, giving estimated likely future impacts) or *ex-post* basis (i.e. after proposal or project implementation, giving actual impacts).

Cost benefit analysis (CBA) is the most popular method used by government, as CBA monetises both costs and benefits and allows relatively easy comparison across disparate projects or interventions (i.e. the ratio of benefit to cost has the same basic meaning across all CBA studies).

Table 4: Different economic evaluation methods

Method ¹⁴	Description	Example key output	Most common use
Cost-benefit analysis	Involves making assumptions to convert all monetary and non-monetary benefits/costs from a proposal to dollar terms. Future benefits and costs are then converted to their value in today's dollars using a discount rate.	'The estimated net present value of the infrastructure project is \$300 million, with a benefit-cost ratio of 1.15'	Tool for comparing options and assessing if benefits outweigh costs
Cost-effectiveness analysis	Involves calculating a ratio between the costs of a programme and a quantified (but not monetised) outcome measure. Different options are usually compared using that metric.	'The programme saved 1 life per \$100,000 spent'	Tool for comparing different programmes with similar aims
Cost-utility analysis	A type of cost-effectiveness analysis where the outcome measure of interest is a quality adjusted life year (QALY).	'The programme costs \$10,000 per quality-adjusted life year improved'	Tool for comparing different health programmes
Social Return on Investment	Involves assigning monetary values to social, environmental, and economic benefits of a programme. Results are expressed as a ratio of benefits to monetary investment.	'The programme costs \$1000 in investment, and creates \$2000 in social value, with a social return on investment of 2:1'	Ex post tool that incorporates information gathered from programme participants.

¹³ <https://www.julianking.co.nz/vfi/econ/>

¹⁴ Each method can be used either prospectively or retrospectively depending on the evaluation question.

Multi-criteria analysis (MCA) approaches	Involves creating a set of criteria to compare and score different programmes. Programmes may be scored using numbers or descriptions of different levels.	‘Option A is preferred with the highest suitability across the identified criteria, and is scored 80% overall across efficiency, cost, equity and effectiveness’	Ex ante tool to compare options or assess if a programme meets a minimum requirement.
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Source: Australian Centre for Evaluation (2025).

Table 5 outlines when different economic evaluation methods might be used, including some common constraints associated with each method.

Table 5: Uses of different economic evaluation methods

Cost-benefit analysis	
When the method is used	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tends to be used in fields where it is possible to convert non-monetary benefits into dollar values. For example, government spending on infrastructure projects, trade projects, or projects with a quantifiable economic benefit. • Can incorporate multiple benefits and does not have to focus on a single, primary benefit or defined beneficiary group. For example, environmental investments may benefit many communities that are not actively involved in the programme. • Can incorporate multiple types of costs, which is important where there may be non-financial costs. • Generally used ex ante to inform decision making. • Required in some regulatory and business case processes (for example, by the Office of Impact Analysis, Infrastructure Australia, state/territory Treasuries). In some fields (especially infrastructure and transport) there are prescribed processes and methods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires converting benefits to dollar values, which can be difficult or hard to interpret if the benefits are not financial in nature (for example, lives saved). • Heavily reliant on assumptions, which means it can produce misleading results if poorly implemented. • Requires more specialist expertise than some other economic evaluation methods. • Can be time and resource intensive given its comprehensiveness.
Cost-effectiveness analysis	
When the method is used	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tends to be used in areas where it is difficult, or not meaningful, to try to convert benefits into a dollar value. For example, in health, accident safety and education where the primary benefit may be lives saved.⁴ • Particularly effective where there is one benefit that is of primary interest, such as ‘lives saved’. Also effective where the beneficiary cohort is identifiable. • Can be kept simple and so conducted by people without specialist expertise if a rigorous estimate of the effect of a programme is already available (for example, from an impact evaluation). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally focused on one particular outcome of interest (for example, lives saved). Can be less useful if the proposal does not have a single benefit that is of primary importance. • Can be difficult to compare proposals if their outcomes are not directly comparable. For example, lives saved compared to better educational outcomes. • Because benefits are not valued in monetary terms, CEA can only identify the most cost-effective way of achieving

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be clearer for communicating to non-expert audiences, e.g., the main output is ‘the programme cost \$100,000 per each additional life saved’. • Often used ex post to review/evaluate a programme that has already been implemented. 	<p>a given outcome. It cannot indicate whether the preferred option is a net benefit to society.</p>
Cost-utility analysis	
When the method is used	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tends to be used for health programmes. • This is a type of cost-effectiveness analysis where the primary outcome is often ‘quality adjusted life years’ (QALYs) or ‘disability-adjusted life years’ (DALYs). Used when QALYs or DALYs are of primary interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires measuring QALYs which may mean collecting additional data using a specific survey questionnaire (typically an assessment tool like ‘EQ-5D’). • All limitations of cost-effectiveness analysis generally apply to cost utility analysis.
Multi-criteria analysis (MCA) approaches	
When the method is used	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tends to be used in areas where it is difficult to monetise both costs and benefits of a programme. • Also used in combination with a CBA where the programme has multiple benefits of interest that are difficult, or not meaningful, to monetise. • May be used for filtering options before applying more detailed quantitative analysis to a potential infrastructure programme. Can also be used as a final output. • It can incorporate multiple benefits, and does not have to focus on a single, primary benefit. • More often used to make funding decisions prior to implementation or ex ante. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert judgement is required for criteria selection and scoring, which can be complex to implement and can give misleading results if done poorly. • Relies less on quantitative approaches, which may be a limitation depending on the circumstances and preferences of decision-makers. • Can identify preferred options but cannot indicate whether the preferred option is a net benefit to society.

Source: Australian Centre for Evaluation (2025).

The role and limits of economic evaluation: As alluded to above, economic evaluation can provide useful information to decision-makers, particularly about efficiency and the balance of costs and benefits. However, only in very rare situations would economic evaluation be the sole determinant of investment decisions. Standard methods such as cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis struggle to capture relational, cultural, spiritual and equity dimensions of value that are central to Pacific understandings of wellbeing. Some of the most important outcomes, such as identity, language, mana, and strengthened relationships, are difficult or inappropriate to monetise, and aggregation into a single net benefit figure can mask who gains, who loses and which values are treated as non-negotiable. Economic evaluation is therefore best used as one valuable input alongside other considerations that complement it (e.g. social, cultural and relational impacts) and decision-makers’ (strategic priorities).

The Value-for-Investment framework

The Value for Investment (Vfi) approach incorporates insights from economic analysis within a broader approach. Vfi is a structured evaluation method that examines how well resources are used, whether sufficient value is created, and how greater value can be achieved. It integrates evaluative and economic thinking, mixed-methods evidence, explicit criteria and standards, and participatory sense-making across the evaluation cycle (King, Crocket & Field, 2023). “Value for money” is often used as a shorthand for economic efficiency or cost-effectiveness, whereas Vfi is an evaluative framework that can incorporate efficiency alongside other criteria such as equity, ethics, relevance, and sustainability. In this sense, Vfi re-frames how value-for-money questions are addressed, from a narrow economic focus to an explicit evaluative inquiry into whether the overall investment represents good use of resources and meets its value proposition, given what matters to affected people and communities. This approach enables clear, well-reasoned judgements about resource use in complex public programmes where many important outcomes cannot be monetised (King, 2019).

Vfi principles: The Vfi is guided by four foundational principles that position the approach as a system rather than a single method, providing a logic for combining economic tools (e.g., cost-benefit, cost-effectiveness) with broader social, cultural, and equity considerations in contextually responsive evaluations (King, 2019; Gargani & King, 2023):

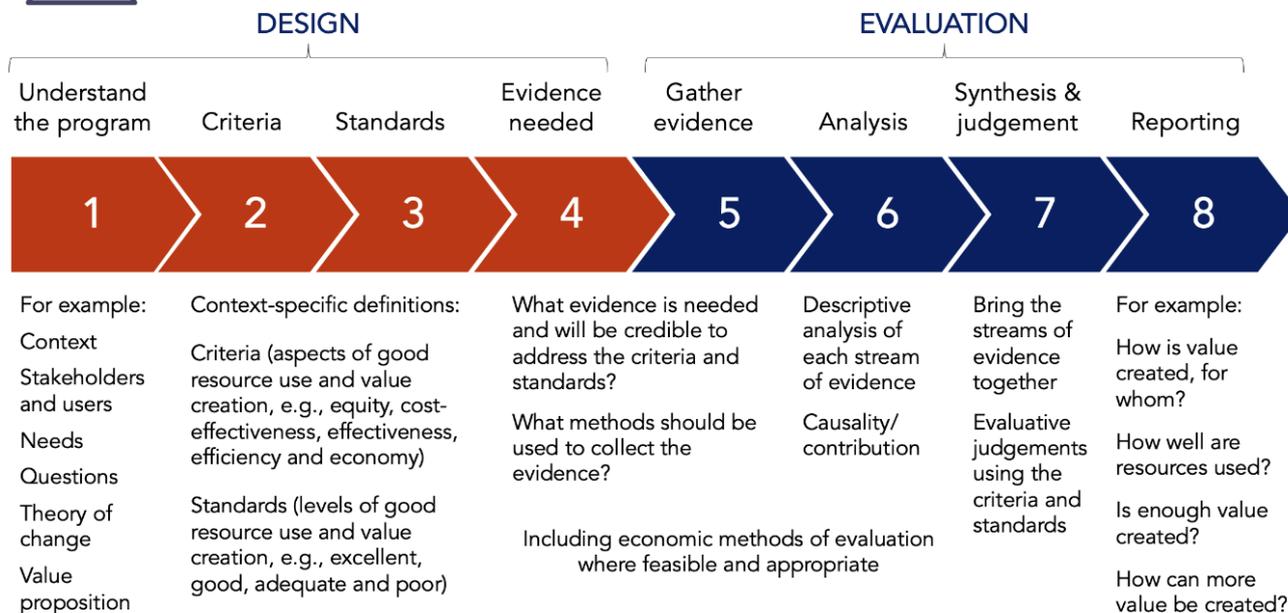
- **Interdisciplinary approach:** Combining theory and practice from evaluation and economics to build on the complementary strengths of both disciplines and gain a nuanced understanding of a programme’s resources, actions, consequences, and value.
- **Mixed methods:** Combining quantitative and qualitative evidence for stronger conclusions and to build a comprehensive picture of value. This allows evaluators to capture measurable impacts alongside lived experience and contextual insights.
- **Evaluative reasoning:** Interpreting evidence through the lens of explicit, co-created and contextually defined criteria (dimensions of value) and standards (levels of performance) to express what matters and what “good” looks like, and make clear and defensible value judgements.
- **Participatory engagement:** Engaging stakeholders in co-creating the evaluation and making sense of the results so that judgements about value are legitimate and contextually grounded.

The Five Es: A widely used starting point for developing context-specific Vfi criteria are the 5Es (economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and cost-effectiveness) (King, 2024). In this framing, and as used by agencies such as the UK’s Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), economy relates to good stewardship of resources; efficiency assesses how well resources are used to maximise outputs; effectiveness considers how well the programme achieves outcomes and impacts; cost-effectiveness focuses on the extent to which the value created justifies the resources used; and equity addresses inequities and distributive justice in design, delivery, and outcomes. While not definitive, these criteria provide an adaptable foundation for defining “good resource use” in a given programme or system, to be refined and extended through context-specific stakeholder deliberation (King et al., 2023; King, 2024; King and Hurrell, 2024). The Vfi approach insists that criteria should be defined contextually, but in practice the 5Es often provide a convenient starting

point because they systematically span the programme value chain from resources to actions and outputs, through to outcomes and impacts.

The Vfi steps: The Vfi approach consists of an eight-step process that can be used for any value-for-investment evaluation (Figure 9).

1. **Understand the programme:** This step clarifies context, stakeholders, needs, key evaluation questions, theory of change, and the value proposition, often extending the theory of change with a value proposition and theory of value creation that makes explicit how and for whom value is created (including opportunity costs and equity).
2. **Define criteria (aspects of value):** Criteria specify what “good resource use” means in context, typically covering resources invested, how the resources are allocated and used, consequences of the resource use, and the basis for judging the merit, worth and significance of the resource use (e.g., economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equity, ethics, relevance, sustainability), and should be co-created with stakeholders.
3. **Define standards (levels of performance):** Standards describe what different levels of performance (e.g., excellent, good, adequate, poor) look like for each criterion, usually captured in rubrics that provide an agreed basis for judgements and help focus later evidence collection and analysis.
4. **Identify evidence needed:** Criteria and standards are then used to decide what evidence is needed and will be credible to address each criterion and level, and what mix of methods (economic and/or other) and data sources are appropriate.
5. **Gather Evidence:** Mixed-methods data collection is undertaken against the agreed evidence needs, combining sources such as financial data, monitoring data, surveys, interviews, statistical and economic analysis, and other quantitative and qualitative sources to illuminate both the “numbers” and the story behind them.
6. **Analyse Evidence:** Each stream of evidence is analysed descriptively and, where appropriate, using causal or contribution analysis, with attention to uncertainty and to how costs and consequences relate (including, but not limited to, formal economic analyses where feasible).
7. **Synthesis and evaluative judgement:** Evidence is brought together and interpreted through the explicit lens of the agreed criteria and standards to answer questions such as “How well are resources used?” and “Is the investment worth it?”, producing transparent evaluative judgements about Vfi.
8. **Reporting and use:** The final step is to present clear, well-reasoned answers to Vfi questions (often structured around the rubrics and theories of change/value creation) in ways that support decision-making, learning, and adaptation, with stakeholders engaged throughout to enhance understanding, ownership, and use.



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inter-disciplinary | mixed methods | evaluative reasoning | participatory

Figure 9: Julian King’s Value-For-Investment Approach

The Pacific Living Standards Framework

Traditional notions of Pacific wealth: There is a rich body of Pacific literature that challenges Western notions of wealth by emphasising relationships, culture, land, spirituality, and wellbeing (McDonald, 1974; Pitt, 1970; O’Meara, 1990, Tamasese, Peteru and Waldegrave, 1997). In line with these views, Perese (2009) describes the traditional Samoan concept of ‘wealth’ as being deeply rooted in the pursuit of collective and familial well-being - transcending the narrow boundaries of finance and material accumulation. As Turner (1884) notes:

...no “poor laws” are needed...The sick, the aged, the blind, the lame and even the vagrant, has always a house and home, and food and raiment, as far as he considers he needs it. A stranger may at first sight, think a Samoan one of the poorest of the poor, and yet he may live ten years with that Samoan and not be able to make him understand what poverty really is, in the European sense of the word. “How is it?” he will always say. “No food! Has he no friends? No house to live in! Where did he grow? Are there no houses belonging to his friends? Have the people there no love for each other? (Turner, 1884, p.160)

Traditional exchanges of cultural treasures and artefacts such as the Samoan ‘ie toga (finely woven mats) and Tongan, koloa (women’s wealth, most commonly fine mats and textiles) were valued because they carried deep cultural, spiritual, and genealogical significance. Their worth was measured by the connections they represented, the craftsmanship involved in their creation, and their central role in ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, and village/community gatherings.

Following the introduction of European goods to the Pacific and developing cash economies throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century’s, exchanges of cultural treasures/artefacts

became supplemented with money. In Samoa, for *malaga* (travelling parties) in particular, developmental phases such as the construction of roads and the use of wheeled transport substantiated the declining use of *'ie toga* (damageable products) and perishable foods and increased the use and popularity of transportable goods such as tinned food and cash (McDonald, 1974; Pitt, 1970).

Contemporary notions of Pacific wealth: Today, the exchange of cultural treasures/artefacts like *'ie toga* and *koloa* continue to symbolise the spiritual and collective significance of wealth - strengthening relationships across families and communities. Perese (2009) depicts this perspective, contrasting it with Western ideas of accumulation, in the following quote:

“The wealth of a Samoan man contrary to Western thought is not shown by how much he earns or saves, but by how much he gives away and how much is returned” (Personal Communication, Lemalu Rosamonde Afamasaga, Apia, 2003 - cited in Perese, 2009)

As Pacific peoples in New Zealand engage in wage labour, education and business, these cultural understandings of wealth remain deeply relevant. They show that Pacific economies operate through both financial and cultural exchange, where the ability to contribute to the collective is itself a key marker of wellbeing and prosperity. Pitt (1970) describes a traditional Samoan world view that associates prosperity and wealth with the collective pooling of resources for collective benefit. In contrast, greed is seen as a moral failing that leads to selfishness, poverty, and ultimately, isolation. Tamasese, Peteru, and Waldegrave (1997) further highlight that a person’s sense of self-worth can be seriously undermined when they are unable to fulfil cultural roles and responsibilities - reinforcing the idea that wellbeing is relational and culturally defined.

The Pacific Living Standards Framework: These enduring values are reflected in the Pacific Living Standards Framework (PLSF), a culturally grounded adaptation of New Zealand’s Living Standards Framework (LSF). The PLSF integrates Pacific methodologies, perspectives, and knowledge systems to guide inclusive policy, culturally relevant evaluation, and improved outcomes for Pacific peoples.

- **Core components of the PLSF** reflect Pacific peoples’ holistic view of wellbeing. These include foundational cultural values such as *'āiga* (family), reciprocity, respect, spirituality, and connection to land and sea. The framework prioritises collective and relational wellbeing, emphasising community, intergenerational ties, and shared identity over individual metrics. It also integrates Pacific methodologies and knowledge systems to inform policy and evaluation. To measure wellbeing, the PLSF highlights the utility of tools like the Pacific Identity and Wellbeing Scale – Revised (PIWBS-R), which captures dimensions such as perceived familial and societal wellbeing, group membership and belonging, religious centrality, and cultural efficacy.
- **The structure and application** of the PLSF are guided by key cultural and strategic components. It draws on Polotu-Endemann’s fonofale Model (see page 46), to represent Pacific wellbeing with family at its foundation and culture as the protective roof. The framework aligns with the Ministry for Pacific Peoples long-term strategy, Lalanga Fou, which outlines 18 aspirational outcomes, including thriving Pacific languages, improved health, youth wellbeing, and economic participation. To support system-wide change, it identifies

four government strategy focus areas for systems shifts: cultural values-based approaches, partnerships, performance improvement, and capability building.

- **The PLSF focuses on understanding and improving Pacific peoples’ wellbeing and economic outcomes** through culturally informed, data-driven approaches. The LSF, combined with the PLSF wellbeing indicators, provides a strategic tool to assess and guide policies affecting Pacific communities. It emphasises relational and collective values alongside economic metrics, aiming to embed a Pacific lens in Treasury’s advice and cross-agency collaboration to improve wellbeing outcomes.
- **Understanding Pacific capitals is essential** for designing inclusive, effective, and culturally grounded policies that support the wellbeing and long-term prosperity of Pacific peoples in New Zealand. The PLSF contextualises four capitals (social, human, natural, financial and physical) within Pacific worldviews and highlights how these capitals interact to support Pacific wellbeing through interconnected relationships grounded in cultural values, collective identity, and family-centred priorities.

Aspect	Pacific LSF Capitals	General LSF Capitals
Social Capital	Emphasises collective identity and values, family values and community cohesion as key strengths maintaining social and collective wellbeing.	Emphasises networks, institutions, social cohesion - but may focus more on measurable social structures and relationships in general terms.
Human Capital	Includes education, skills, health (spiritual, emotional and physical), cultural knowledge and language as vital assets tied deeply to identity and intergenerational wellbeing.	Focuses on education, skills, health but typically framed within individual capacity and economic productivity terms.
Natural Capital	Reflects a Pacific worldview of strong spiritual and physical connection to land and sea, respect for the natural environment and awareness of climate threats to ancestral homelands and Aotearoa.	Covers natural resources and ecosystem services, focusing on environmental sustainability and resource availability
Financial and physical Capital	Includes both financial resources and cultural financial practices like remittances, family priorities and obligations.	Focuses on physical and financial assets, infrastructure, wealth measured economically and institutionally.

Summary - economic evaluation and value-for-investment frameworks

Economic evaluation frameworks:

- **Types of economic evaluation:** Economic evaluation methods help assess the value of health interventions by comparing costs with outcomes. Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) expresses both costs and benefits in monetary terms to determine overall net welfare gain. Cost-Effectiveness Analysis (CEA) compares costs with outcomes measured in natural units, such as life-years gained, making it useful when benefits can't be easily monetised. Cost-Utility Analysis (CUA), a subtype of CEA, evaluates outcomes using metrics like quality-adjusted life years (QALYs) or disability-adjusted life years (DALYs), allowing comparisons across different

health interventions. Other approaches, such as Cost-Minimization Analysis and Cost-Consequence Analysis, are applied in specific contexts where either outcomes are equivalent or multiple outcomes need to be considered separately.

- **Methodological considerations:** A rigorous economic evaluation requires careful selection of appropriate comparators, a clearly defined perspective - such as healthcare system or societal - and a suitable timeframe that captures all relevant costs and outcomes. To account for the value of money over time, discounting is applied to compare present and future costs and benefits. Long-term impacts are often estimated using modelling techniques like decision trees and Markov models, which simulate complex pathways and outcomes. Given the inherent uncertainty in assumptions and data, sensitivity analyses are essential to test the robustness of results and ensure confidence in the findings.
- **Application and practical insights:** Integrating economic evaluation with broader evaluative frameworks allows for a more comprehensive understanding of value, extending beyond cost-efficiency to include equity and contextual relevance. While placing monetary values on health outcomes - particularly in Cost-Benefit Analysis - remains a significant challenge, transparency, stakeholder engagement, and adaptability are essential to ensure evaluations effectively inform decision-making. By demonstrating value-for-money, economic evaluations play a critical role in shaping resource allocation, guiding policy decisions, and influencing institutional priorities.

Value-for-investment approach: The Vfi approach provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating how well resources are used in policies and programmes, going beyond traditional economic methods and metrics to capture broader dimensions of value.

- **Broader concept of value:** Vfi reframes value-for-money as good resource use, focusing on policies and programmes as investments in value propositions that create social, cultural, environmental, and economic value. It recognises multiple dimensions of value including equity, ethics, cultural significance, and sustainability.
- **Interdisciplinary integration:** Vfi combines economic and evaluative thinking, drawing on the strengths of both disciplines to assess not just whether value is created, but how and for whom. This integration supports more nuanced and context-sensitive evaluations.
- **Mixed methods:** Using quantitative and qualitative evidence in intentional combinations to strengthen validity, unpack the story behind the numbers, and unpack a fuller picture of how value is created.
- **Evaluative reasoning:** Interpreting evidence through explicit, co-created and contextually defined criteria and standards to express what matters, define what good value looks like, and make transparent, defensible judgements about performance and value.
- **Participatory and inclusive design:** Stakeholder engagement is central to Vfi - to define what “value” means in their own context. Co-creating evaluations and involving stakeholders in interpreting evidence ensures that diverse perspectives are considered and that the evaluation is relevant and actionable.
- **Practical and systematic evaluation process:** Vfi follows a clear, logical sequence that simplifies the evaluation process and makes it intuitive and adaptable across diverse sectors

and contexts. By linking resources to outcomes and value created, it supports adaptive learning and accountability, helping decision-makers identify opportunities to enhance impact.

The Pacific Living Standards Framework:

- **Wealth as collective and cultural wellbeing:** Pacific notions of wealth prioritise relationships, cultural identity, spirituality, and collective wellbeing over financial accumulation. Wealth is relational, not material. Prosperity is measured not by accumulation but by generosity and reciprocity, where giving strengthens collective identity. Despite engagement in wage labour and modern economies, Pacific peoples continue to uphold traditional values of collective contribution and relational wellbeing.
- **The Pacific Living Standards Framework (PLSF):** This framework integrates Pacific values and methodologies into policy, addressing gaps in mainstream models by focusing on cultural, spiritual, and relational dimensions of wellbeing.
- **Holistic wellbeing indicators:** Tools like the PIWBS-R measure wellbeing through cultural lenses, including belonging, religious centrality, and familial wellbeing.
- **Pacific capitals reshape policy:** Social, human, natural, and financial/physical capitals are redefined through Pacific worldviews, emphasising interconnected relationships and family-centred priorities.

Literature scan key learnings to inform the Pacific Value-for-Investment Model

Learnings from Pacific research and practice frameworks

- **Start with Indigenous values, not just tools:** Pacific frameworks are built from the ground up with cultural values like alofa (love), faka'apa'apa (respect), and va fealoa'i (relational space). These aren't decorative - they're foundational. The framework should reflect the lived realities, languages, and metaphors of the communities it serves.
- **Centre relationships and connection:** Relationality isn't a side note - it's the core. Concepts like *Teu le Vā* and *Talanoa* show that nurturing respectful relationships and open dialogue is essential. The framework should prioritise how people relate to one another, to their environment, and to their histories.
- **Design for holistic wellbeing:** Pacific models view wellbeing as multidimensional - spiritual, emotional, physical, and social. Think beyond clinical or academic silos. Use metaphors like the fonofale to represent interconnectedness, and ensure the framework adapts to cultural and environmental contexts.
- **Weave rather than extract knowledge:** Frameworks like fa'afaletui, kakala, and tivaevae emphasise co-creation and collective reflection. Knowledge is woven together from different perspectives, not mined from individuals. The approach to developing a framework should be dialogic, inclusive, and community-led.
- **Challenge dominant paradigms:** These frameworks are acts of resistance. They reject top-down, Western-centric models and instead reclaim Indigenous epistemologies - storytelling,

symbolism, ancestral wisdom. The P-VIM should be unapologetically Pacific-centred, not just culturally “inclusive”.

- **Empower Pacific peoples and communities to lead:** Pacific research and practice frameworks prioritise reciprocity, shared decision-making, and intergenerational wisdom. The P-VIM should empower communities to define their own priorities and solutions, not just participate in someone else’s agenda. In short: don’t just build a framework - build a movement. One that’s rooted in culture, led by Pacific peoples, and alive with meaning.

Learnings from evaluation good practice

- **Clearly articulate purpose:** Ground P-VIM evaluation in a clear, value-driven purpose that supports learning, accountability, and meaningful social change.
- **Design for flexibility and practical utility:** The P-VIM must be adaptable across different purposes, contexts, and stages of programme delivery, while emphasising practical utility by generating insights that inform real-world decisions and drive continuous improvement.
- **Integrate diverse theories and methods:** A robust P-VIM should integrate diverse approaches—such as theory-based, stakeholder-responsive, and user-focused models—alongside a tailored mix of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method designs that align with programme goals. Tools like logic models and theories of change can clarify pathways and assumptions but must be used flexibly to reflect complexity and context. For multi-stakeholder initiatives, collaborative models like Collective Impact help align diverse activities around shared goals and drive system-level change.
- **Apply global standards thoughtfully:** It is useful to apply international benchmarks such as the OECD criteria - relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and coherency - as guiding lenses for assessing programme performance. These criteria offer a structured foundation for evaluating both outcomes and processes. However, their application should be adapted thoughtfully to align with the specific purpose of the evaluation, the needs of stakeholders, and the resources available, ensuring that the framework remains contextually relevant and practically useful.
- **Prioritise equity and structural change:** Make equity a guiding principle by designing inclusive evaluations that address systemic barriers and actively shift power dynamics.

Learnings from Pacific evaluation frameworks

- **Embed Pacific methodologies deeply - not superficially:** Don’t just reference Pacific ways of knowing - integrate them meaningfully across every phase. That means co-creating theories of change, logic models, and frameworks *with* Pacific communities, not *for* them.
- **Co-creation is non-negotiable:** Start with intentional collaboration involving Pacific providers, leaders, and communities. This ensures the framework is culturally relevant, responsive, and grounded in lived realities.
- **Use talanoa as a relational method:** Talanoa is a philosophy of open, respectful dialogue. It fosters trust and authenticity, making it ideal for gathering insights that reflect Pacific values and relationships.

- **Evaluation must be grounded in Pacific values:** Values like *reciprocity, respect, spirituality, and love* should guide the evaluation criteria, engagement protocols, and data interpretation. These aren't add-ons - they're the foundation.
- **Blend methodologies with purpose:** Pacific frameworks can be harmonised with Western models (e.g., Patton's utilisation-focused evaluation, OECD criteria) to create designs that are both culturally credible and practically useful. This convergence strengthens both rigour and relevance.
- **Prioritise relational accountability:** Frameworks like *fa'afaletui* show how to weave multiple perspectives and layers of truth. The design should honour communal knowledge systems and build trust through transparent, reciprocal relationships.
- **Ensure findings have utility and impact:** Follow the lead of TIRIA and MFAT by including responses from agencies or funders on how findings will be used. This closes the loop and reinforces accountability to the communities whose voices shaped the work.
- **Weave innovation with cultural integrity:** Like *Fibre Fale*, embed Pacific-led innovation, relational ethics and Indigenous creativity guide the development of the framework. In essence, the framework should be a living, breathing reflection of Pacific values - co-created, relational, culturally grounded, and designed for real-world utility.
- **Design for systems-level impact, not just programme outcomes:** The framework should aim higher than measuring isolated results. Like *Kua Ea Te Whakangao* and NZR's *Pasifika Strategy*, it should be capable of influencing policy, reshaping funding models, and shifting institutional culture.
- **Build capability, not dependency:** Empower Pacific providers by embedding tools, training, and mentoring directly into your framework. Reports like *Pasefika Proud* and *PPPH* show that capacity-building in evaluation, data systems, and reporting is essential for long-term success and self-determination.
- **Make learning a living process:** Treat evaluation as a continuous journey - not a one-time checkpoint. The P-VIM should include feedback loops, community-led sense-making, and space for adaptation. Reflection and refinement should be embedded, so the P-VIM evolves alongside the communities it serves.

Learnings from economic evaluation, Value-for-Investment and Pacific Living Standards frameworks

- **Expand the definition of value:** Traditional economic evaluation frameworks (e.g., CBA, CEA, CUA) focus on comparing costs with outcomes, often in monetary or health-related units. However, the Vfi approach and the PLSF broaden this definition - recognising value as multidimensional, encompassing cultural, social, spiritual, ethical, and environmental aspects.
- **Integrate cultural and contextual perspectives:** Both Vfi and PLSF challenge mainstream models by embedding cultural relevance and community priorities into evaluation. Vfi promotes stakeholder-driven definitions of value, while PLSF reflects Pacific worldviews where the value of wealth is relational, collective, and spiritually grounded. These approaches ensure that evaluations are meaningful, inclusive, and context-sensitive.

- **Ensure methodological rigor and flexibility:** Economic evaluations require clear comparators, defined perspectives, and robust modelling to assess long-term impacts. Vfi complements this with mixed methods and evaluative reasoning, combining qualitative and quantitative evidence to support transparent and credible judgements. PLSF adds culturally grounded indicators like the PIWBS-R to measure wellbeing through Pacific lenses.
- **Collective wellbeing as a core outcome:** Across all frameworks, there is a shift from individual metrics to collective wellbeing. Pacific notions of wealth and value prioritise reciprocity, and social cohesion. Vfi and PLSF reinforce this by focusing on shared outcomes, intergenerational ties, and relational wellbeing as central to policy and programme success.
- **Strategic and system-level impact:** These frameworks guide decision-making by linking resources to outcomes and broader value creation. Vfi supports adaptive learning and accountability across sectors, while PLSF aligns with Lalanga Fou’s aspirational goals and redefines key capitals - social, human, natural, and financial - through a Pacific lens to shape inclusive, effective policy.

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