

Achieving impact from our research

Summary of PML Research Impact Plan 2020-2025

Research excellence supporting a sustainable ocean

Delivering research that benefits society and the environment is core to PML's ethos. We encourage all our staff to play a role in achieving impact and realising the potential of our research.

PML recognises impact as a marked "change" in approach, behaviour, policy, practice or product informed by research. We are committed to providing our staff with tools and techniques, that complement academic activities, to help them consider and plan for impact from an early stage. By thinking about the impact our research could have from the outset we are better able to plan an effective route, put steps in place to evidence and learn from the process and ultimately increase the likelihood that our work will benefit the environment and/or society.

PML researchers are fundamental to achieving impact and therefore we will strive to ensure they are appropriately supported and resourced to make the most of the opportunities they have.

PML's Research Impact Plan sets out the frameworks and strategies to deliver that support.

The arrows in the diagram below represent our impact enablers, below each of which sit a range of detailed actions and activities. Cross-cutting our approach is an understanding of the value of strong relationships with our research users and beneficiaries and the need to continue to learn from our approach.

What it means for our staff

- Access to training in key impact tools and skills to help develop impact plans
- Toolkit of templates and useful guides
- Support for evidence collection
- Focused impact events to share ideas, good practice and develop new concepts
- News updates to keep everyone informed of the latest approaches, events and opportunities
- Coordinated Stakeholder Mapping and management to capitalise on opportunities



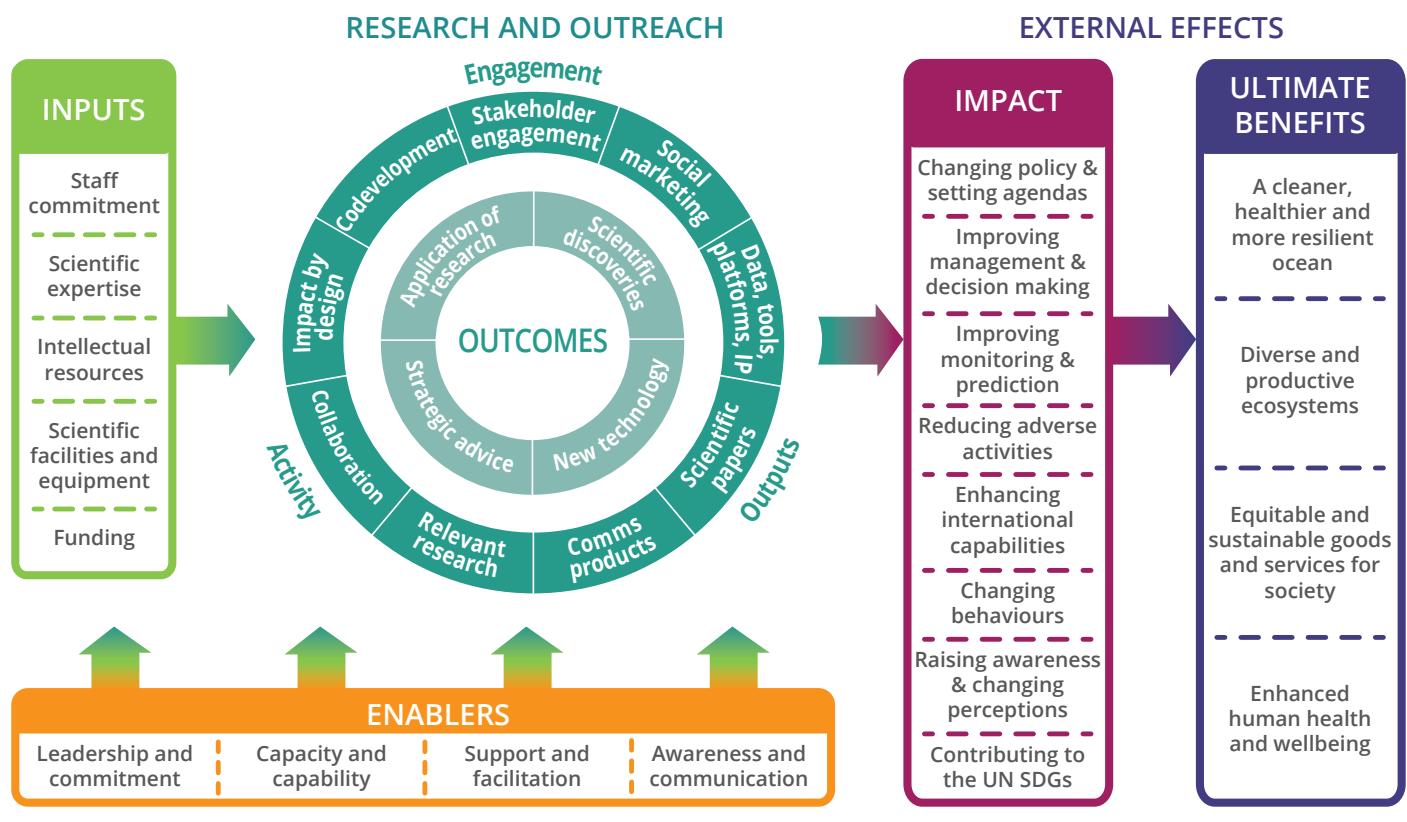
Planning for change

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At the heart of the PML Research Impact Plan is the Theory of Change (ToC) approach, which is a key tool for establishing impact focused thinking and planning. It is useful at many levels from organisational aspirations, such as the PML ToC below, to project level impact goals. It does not replace traditional academic activities but complements them by offering a new way of planning ideas that helps us to consider what we want the benefits of research to be from the outset.

Working through the ToC process enables us to think creatively about the impact we want our research to have and think critically about the outputs and research that is needed to achieve this. We recommend to our staff that the ToC process is best done in collaboration with partners and stakeholders who can offer different insights and suggestions. It enables us to strategically plan a pathway and how we will track it to collate evidence and also to learn lessons to feedback into the process.



PML Theory of Change

What it means for our staff

- This approach is recommended for new proposal ideas, particularly those that have a key focus on impact (i.e. impact is predominant in the call or funding stream).
- Training and coaching in the ToC approach available to all staff.
- Dedicated Impact staff available to offer advice and where appropriate facilitate the ToC process.
- Templates and guidance available.
- Science to Impact Challenge areas support cross-fertilisation of ideas and competences to develop new approaches to maximise impact.

Other tools

- ToC is a key tool for staff to utilise in project planning, development and delivery but there are other valuable tools that can also support a more impact focussed approach. These include Problem Tree Analysis, Stakeholder Mapping and LogFrames.
- Training and coaching is available in all of these tools so that researchers can select the most appropriate tools for their needs.
- Tools and training to support impact monitoring and evaluation are also available. We encourage staff to adequately resource impact activities when developing proposals with targetted activities and trained staff to support.