



# Bridging the gap – Methods to demonstrate impact and value

## How to plan for, demonstrate and communicate real-world impacts to funders

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There's often a gap between research objectives and expectations for achieving demonstrable impact for people and the environment. A practical approach to planning for, and demonstrating impact, helps bridge the gap and communicate the real-world impacts that funders want to see.

### It's not rocket science (even if it is)

There is no project that is too complex for its intended impact to be understood and communicated clearly. In fact, the more complex a project may be, the more important it is to communicate it clearly to a diverse audience, including funders.

The importance of communications and story-telling in the funder landscape cannot be understated. All funders want value-for-money, and they want to see the impact of their contributions.

Good communications that demonstrate impact can greatly enhance the funding potential of a project, increasing the likelihood of impact through the application phase.

Techniques such as plain English, video and digital communications, social media engagement, case studies and impact stories help demystify jargon, improve understanding and effectively communicate impact to a broader audience.

### Planning and Measuring Impact

Practical program planning and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools can be applied to any project, no matter how complex. An Impact Pathway, Program Logic or Theory of Change (different names for the same thing) help logically plan the pathways to impact (i.e. how activities and outputs, lead to short-term, then long-term goals). They help highlight assumptions, outline risks and guide the collection of data and stories along the pathway to demonstrate the real-world, tangible benefits of a project.

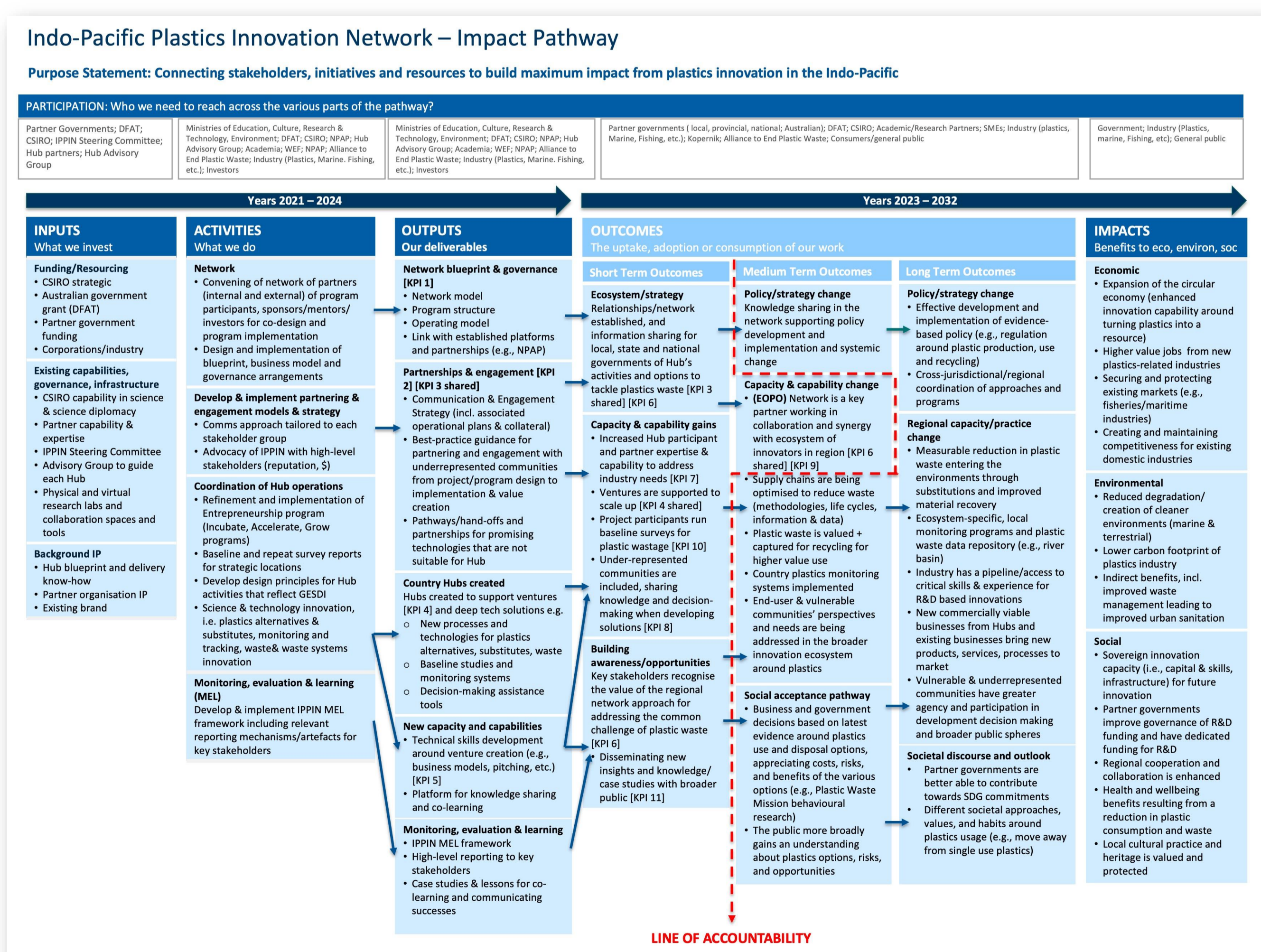


Figure 1: Impact Pathway for CSIRO Indo-Pacific Plastics Innovation Network (IPPIN) project, funded by DFAT.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Strategic Development Group pays respect to the Traditional Custodians of the land, and their Elders past, present and future.

### Monitoring & Evaluation - Data Collection

All projects need data to effectively tell the story of success, demonstrate and communicate impact. M&E systems help plan and undertake data collection at all steps along the project pathway. M&E systems enable regular monitoring, adaptive program management, and support the demonstration and evaluation of impact.

M&E systems are best when they are simple and applicable by all people involved in the project, and collect quantitative and qualitative information. Data collection doesn't need to be complex and can be as simple as a conversation, a targeted question or a short survey.

### Communicating Impact

Communications planning starts with your audience - if your audience is your funder, what are their objectives? What do they want to hear? A simple stakeholder analysis can help unpack their interests, and guide your communications.

Communications should show how your project impacted people or the environment in a tangible way. Stories from the voices of those most impacted are the most powerful.

Communications methods should be succinct and direct – no one likes a 50+ page report. Digital tools like video, social media, case studies and impact stories are effective, time-efficient ways to share the impact of a project in the modern attention landscape.

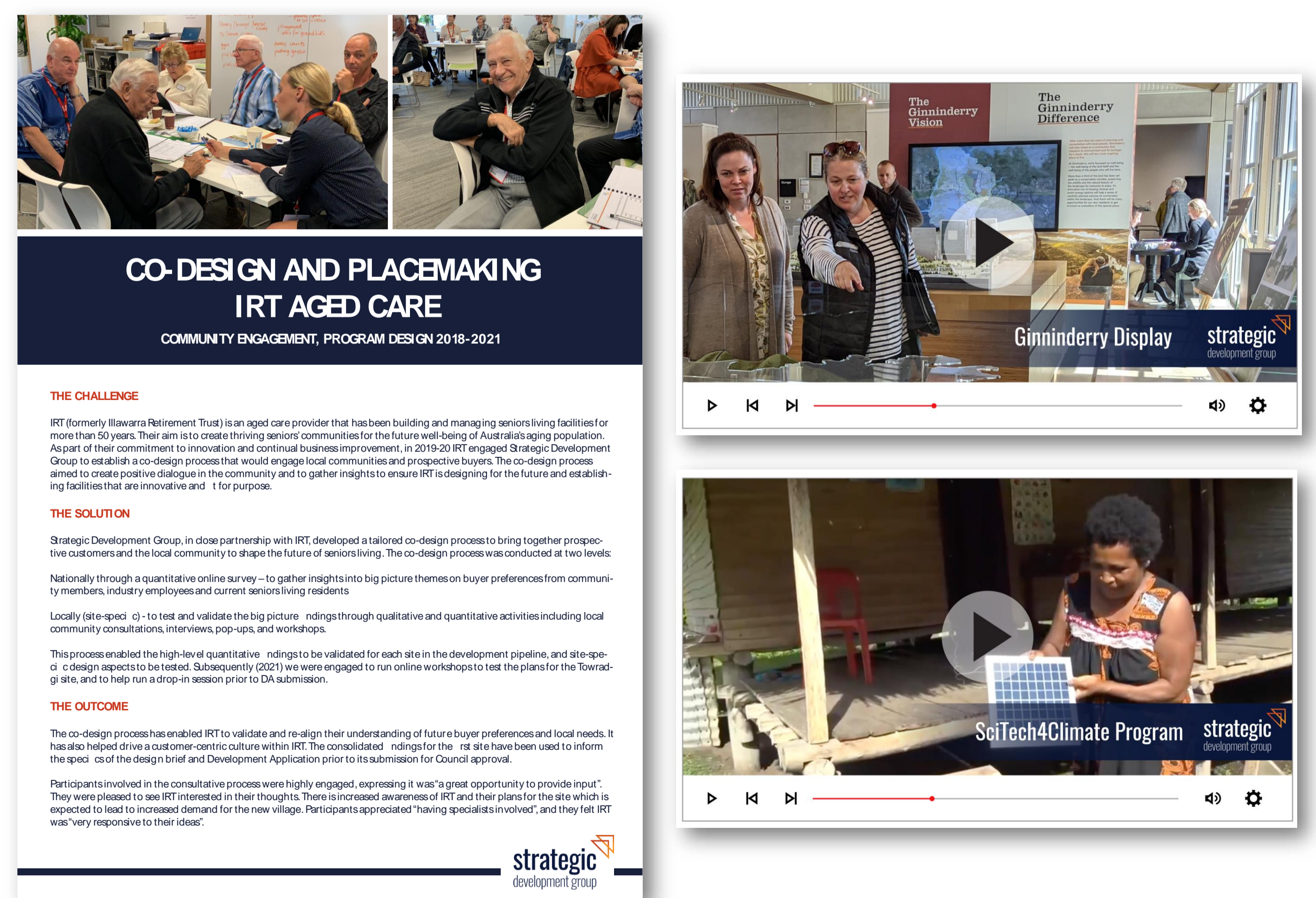


Figure 2 & 3: IRT Co-design Case Study and Ginninderry Display video, Strategic Development Group

Figure 4: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/climate-change/supporting-indo-pacific-tackle-climate-change/scitech4climate-harnessing-science-and-technology-support-climate-resilience-indo-pacific>

