

Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects: Final Evaluation

Main report

14 May 2014

Prepared for: Ministry for Primary Industries



Kinnect
group

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Fileref: 140514 Main Report Evaluation of Maori Agribusiness Prototypes project xx.docx
Last saved: 8-Jul-14

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Citation: Oakden, J., & Wehipeihana, N. (2014). *Evaluation of Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects – Main report*. Wellington: Kinnect Group.

Acknowledgement

This report has developed from the knowledge and expertise of the many people who have been involved in various stages of this project, and who the evaluation team would like to acknowledge and thank. The first acknowledgement is to the six Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects who generously gave of their time to participate in this evaluation. We would also like to acknowledge the contribution and assistance of Ministry for Primary Industries staff from the Māori Primary Sector Partnerships team.

Tuku mihi ki a koutou katoa.

Judy Oakden and Nan Wehipeihana

Executive summary

1. In December 2011 the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), in its previous incarnation as the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), started to try new ways of partnering to support Māori land-owning groups to improve the productivity of their land. The *Māori Agribusiness¹ Prototype projects* were organised by the Māori Primary Sector Partnerships (MPSP) team within MPI to test ways of working in partnership with Māori land owners and the private sector to improve performance and generate public value. Public value includes producing public knowledge, increasing capability of land owners or MPI and increasing productivity. These ways of working were evaluated in 2013 and are documented in this report.
2. Six projects that demonstrate possible prototypes were established, and these involved a range of land-holding structures including Māori freehold land, tribal land and Treaty settlement land. The property sizes ranged from small land blocks under 100 hectares (ha) to ones that spanned up to 200,000 ha². Land utilisation and level of productivity also varied, from recreational use unrelated to primary sector productivity to high-performing farms. All six groups faced key challenges related to accessing the right capability to grow the productivity and profitability of their agribusiness. Two groups were also interested in ways to build economic scale without amalgamating ownership.
3. In the evaluators' view, the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects addressed a good mix of situations that allowed for the testing of different contexts, needs and opportunities for Māori land owners.
4. The evaluation found the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects made a **worthwhile and valuable contribution** by bringing Māori land owners together with experts in multiple fields, to transfer knowledge, build networks, and envision and commit to solutions to improve the productivity of Māori land. The following table outlines the key areas of focus, MPI support and the individual project outputs and outcomes.

¹ The term 'agribusiness' is generally used to mean all the businesses in the sector that are not farming/orcharding/growing/production. While one might typically say 'farming and agribusiness', in this instance 'agribusiness' also includes farming activities. In other contexts 'agribusiness' refers to businesses involved in other activities in marketing chain (e.g. processing, marketing, distribution) and suppliers of inputs (products and services) to farming.

² Tribal rohe.

Table 1: Summary of Māori Agribusiness Prototype

Project	Area of focus	MPI support resulted in the following project outputs and outcomes
Project 1	Successful transfer of land asset from Crown to Iwi as part of a Treaty settlement, along with establishment of a partnership to maintain productivity.	MPI provided access to expert advice and information to enable informed decision making by Māori land owners to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a formal partnership agreement amongst Iwi, and between Iwi and a farm management partner • greater knowledge of the financial and operational performance of the land asset • compare and consider alternative land use options.
Project 2	Shift from leasing out to establishment of a collective management structure for the land blocks to enable a dairy farm conversion.	MPI provided access to expert advice and information to enable informed decision making by Māori land owners to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feasibility study on a dairy venture that considered environmental aspects and owners' cultural needs • greater knowledge of the business structures to enable collective management while retaining original ownership.
Project 3	Convert from leasing out to dairy farming to raise productivity of an area of land.	MPI provided access to expert advice and information to enable informed decision making by Māori land owners to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a dairy farm plan that considers the environmental, social and cultural needs of their shareholders • obtain greater knowledge amongst governance of the technical and financial considerations for the dairy conversion and operating entity.
Project 4	Consolidate disparate beehives on an area of land and further develop manuka honey production.	MPI provided access to expert advice and information to enable informed decision making by Māori land owners to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a stock-take of current land assets to identify those suitable for manuka honey production • a feasibility study of surrounding Māori land assets to identify those suitable for a collaborative manuka honey venture.
Project 5	Develop beekeeping and manuka honey production through a license or lease arrangement with a beekeeping company.	MPI provided access to expert advice and information to enable informed decision making by Māori land owners to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a feasibility study and financial analysis of a possible bee venture.
Project 6(a)	Invest in raising productivity through high-performance orchard management and/or introduction of higher value kiwifruit varieties.	MPI provided access to expert advice and information to enable informed decision making by Māori land owners to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase production, performance and profitability of Māori owned orchards based on the development and implementation of a high performance orchard management plan. • large scale productivity increases and information sharing through the establishment of regional forums of Māori orchardists (BOP, Gisborne, Northland). • develop governance and technical capability.
Project 6(b)	Options for working with Māori dairy farmers to raise productivity through expert assistance and mentoring.	MPI provided access to expert advice and resources to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scope a project aimed at designing and building a customised service for Māori dairy farmers.

5. Available evidence indicates **MPI staff were highly effective in working in partnership** with Māori land owners and a range of other stakeholders in these varied contexts. Amongst the key benefits of the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects are their **contribution** to:
 - building **capacity for problem solving** through improved access to knowledge of feasible agribusiness opportunities so Māori land owners can choose the best ways to improve the productivity of their land
 - **enhancing relationships and networks** between Māori land owners and a range of stakeholders³ and enable them to work together to come up with practical solutions to what had appeared intractable challenges in the past
 - identifying feasible ways for multiple Māori land owners (at times including those with small shares) to consolidate their holdings **to achieve economic scale** needed to support profitable agribusiness
 - supporting the **development of appropriate governance entities** with effective decision-making amongst multiple Māori land owners (at times including those with small shares)
 - **producing public knowledge** by sharing the learnings with other Māori land owners
 - supporting **Māori self-determination**.
6. Two key unanticipated benefits of the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects were identified.
 - Firstly, Māori land owners and MPI staff both reflected that while project establishment and building trusted relationships took some time, once the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects were underway they were able to progress quite quickly.
 - Secondly, the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects achieved both short-term and longer-term solutions. The evaluation found the solutions achieved or plans developed were far reaching – in that they set the foundation, the systems, tools and processes for the ongoing management and development of the Māori land asset.

Conclusions and recommendations

7. MPI has successfully worked with Māori land owners through the Prototype projects to progress multiply owned Māori land development and productivity options. MPI took a relational approach, coupled with using strong processes and tools, to address 'intractable' Māori land related productivity and governance issues. It is worth MPI continuing to work in a similar way.

³ Including a range of business consultants and scientists

8. Key learnings from this small and targeted evaluation are that there are opportunities to add value to MPI's ways of working by using the Prototype project learnings. The evaluators recommend focussing on the following areas:
- **Project readiness:** continue to identify and work with Māori land owners or other stakeholders who want to (and are ready) to take the next steps. MPI staff were skilled in identifying projects that were project ready.
 - **Decision-making:** continue to reinforce that decision-making must rest with Māori land owners. The role of MPI therefore is to bring knowledge, information and networks to assist land owners to consider options and make good decisions.
 - **Document prototype tools and ways of working:** At present the detailed knowledge of the project processes used by MPI resides within MPSP and documentation will assist its application and transfer to a wider audience. MPI needs to capture in more detail the ways of working and learnings with the projects for future use with others.
 - **Relationships:** Retain a relational based approach to engagement and where necessary support other MPI staff to develop these skills or access this knowledge. It is important not to understate the significance of the technical, cultural and contextual knowledge that MPI staff brought to the projects with Māori land owners. They excelled in using this knowledge to build strong relationships with Māori land owners and other stakeholders.
 - **Use of resources:** Future projects need to make provision for external advisors to engage with Māori land owners on more than one occasion to support decision-making. This is more costly than was initially envisaged. MPI harnessed the complementary skills of MPI staff, irrespective of which office or team they were in, for optimum effect in the project. This should be continued.
9. MPSP staff contend that the partnership-focussed, relationship-based approach could also be applied by others in MPI to build trusted relationships more generally.

1 Structure of the report

10. The main evaluation report presents the detailed evaluation findings. This report consists of five parts:
 - context and the rationale for the projects that explored the prototypes
 - overview of the process for selecting and establishing the prototypes that would be explored (that is, Step 1 in Bennett's hierarchy)
 - the evaluation terms of reference, and the framework and data collection methods applied
 - detailed evaluation findings
 - learnings from the evaluation.

2 Context and rationale

11. Improving the productivity of Māori primary assets is a priority for the Minister for Primary Industries – to meet the Government’s commitment to the Export Double goal (that is, doubling the value of primary industry exports by 2025) and as a key outcome of MPI’s *Our Strategy 2030*. It is also a key action under the Government’s Business Growth Agenda and the Māori Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan.
12. There are significant potential growth opportunities on Māori land, with estimates showing potential for an additional \$8 billion in gross output over a 10-year period, assuming a \$3 billion investment, and a potential additional export value of just over \$1.4 billion per year.
13. However, Māori land owners face unique challenges to improve the productivity of their land. These include the need to find ways to:
 - consolidate multiple owners with small shareholdings into a mandated governance entity with effective decision making
 - achieve the economic scale needed to support profitable agribusiness
 - access or build the capability needed to grow agribusiness productivity and profitability.
14. To overcome these challenges, Māori land owners need access to and support for uptake of:
 - technology transfer
 - capability and skills
 - networks and relationships
 - capital investment.

Background to the project

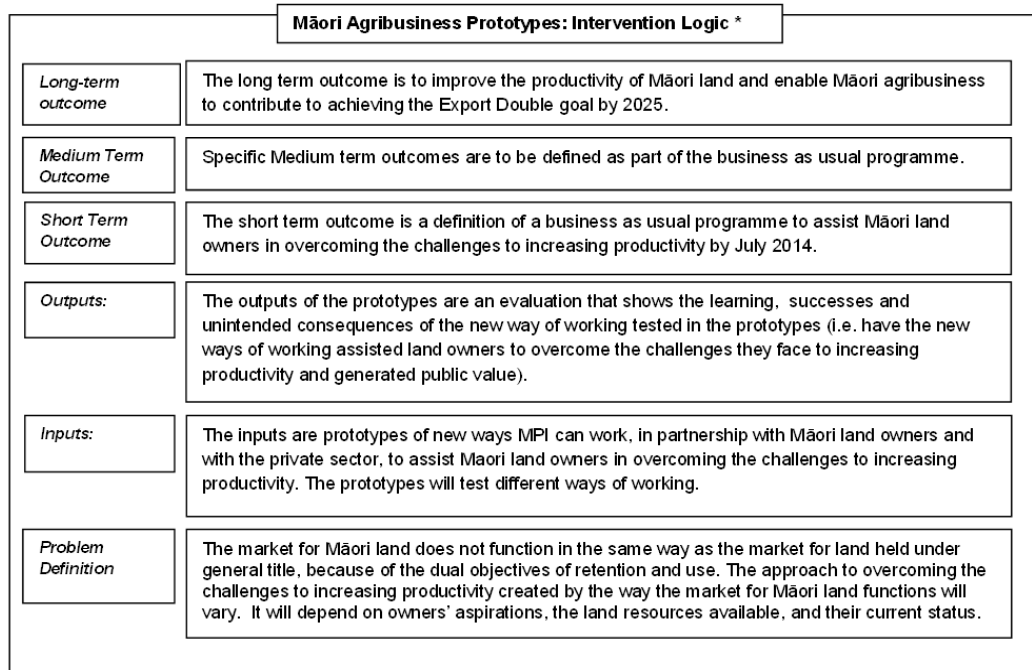
15. In December 2011 the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), in its previous incarnation as the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), decided to test new ways the organisation could work in partnership with Māori land-owning groups to help them improve the productivity of their land. It was recognised that this would also generate public value (for example by producing public knowledge, increasing land owners’ and MPI’s capability, and increasing productivity).
16. This project was led by MPI’s Māori Primary Sector Partnerships (MPSP) branch. They began by undertaking a series of meetings, including site visits, with trustees, shareholders, advisors and managers of several land blocks and Māori agribusinesses representatives to explore the range of challenges and opportunities faced by Māori in the primary sector.

Projects established

17. Over the following 18 months, the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects were initiated to focus on providing Māori land owners with access to information that would enable them to improve the productivity of their land. These built on existing and established relationships with Iwi, Māori land owners and key stakeholders such as the Federation of Māori Authorities, Te Tumu Paeroa⁴, other government agencies, local government and the business community.
18. Through the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects MPI tested a number of ways of working in partnership with the private sector and Māori land owners to improve the productivity of Māori land. The projects enabled MPI to identify and develop approaches whereby it could support Maori landowners improve land productivity
19. MPSP selected and established six prototypes to be tested and brought on board other MPI teams and resources as required. As the prototypes progressed, MPI worked proactively in partnership with the Māori land-owning groups and other strategic partners to assist the land owners to overcome challenges to improving the productivity of their land. It was intended:
 - to use the learnings from the projects to help raise the productivity of Māori land, and contribute to the Export Double target – and hence generate public value
 - that learnings from this project would feed into developing a business-as-usual approach as part of MPI’s 2014–2015 planning process.
20. The intervention logic for the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects is outlined in the following diagram.

⁴ Te Tumu Paeroa is the name of the new Māori Trustee organisation, which is headed by the Māori Trustee, Jamie Tuuta. Te Tumu Paeroa staff are located in six offices around Aotearoa New Zealand.

Figure 1: Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects: Intervention Logic



21. Please note: This intervention logic was developed by MPI at the outset of the project. This is now slightly out-of-date, and it is expected that it might be reviewed as part of any further work.
22. In undertaking any review it would be worthwhile taking into account that Māori are already significant contributors to achieving the Export Double target. Indeed, some Māori agribusinesses are demonstrating both success and sector leadership. Perhaps an appropriate goal would be to "support more Māori land to reach its productive potential". This means growing both the contribution from Māori land and the availability of more Māori land to improve primary sector growth.

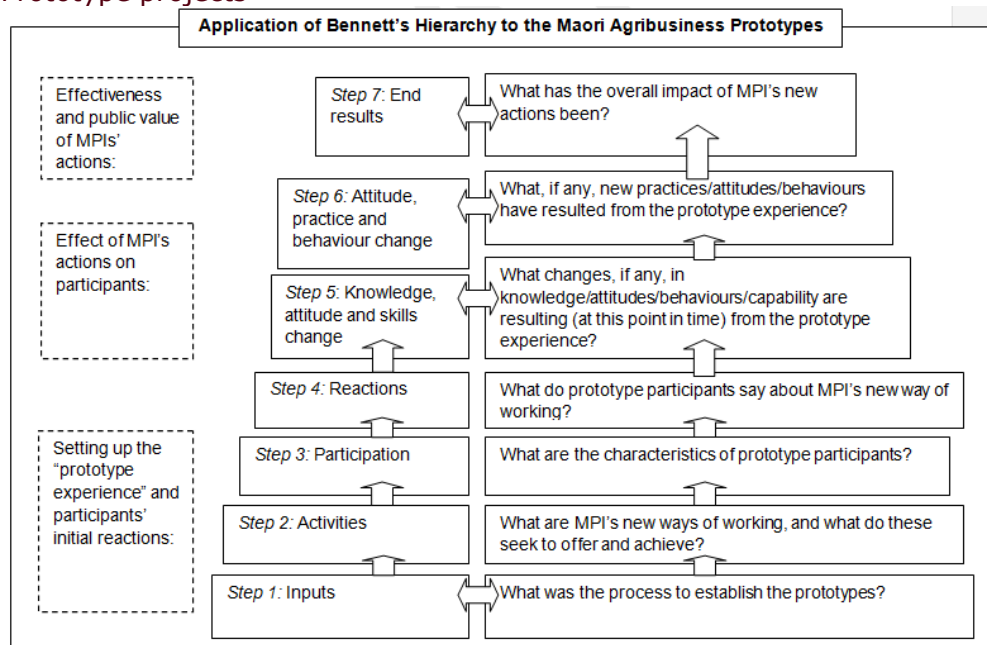
3 Selection of prototype projects

23. MPI considered a range of factors in selecting the groups for prototype projects. The main considerations for selection were:
 - an owner or trustee of Māori land in some form of primary sector production or with potential for production
 - ready and willing to participate in a prototype
 - open to sharing the learning from their involvement.
24. More broadly MPI staff considered to what extent:
 - were the groups looking to overcome one of the challenges Māori land owners typically face in improving their productivity?
 - was the partnership between the group and MPI likely to produce new knowledge or transfer existing knowledge about models to overcome the challenges associated with how the market for Māori land functions?
 - would the partnership allow MPI to test a more proactive way to operate?
25. Proposals were also considered in light of whether:
 - individually, the proposal provided an opportunity to test MPI's role in assisting Māori land owners
 - collectively, the proposals differed from each other sufficiently to increase the scope of MPI's learning.
26. A total of six proposals were selected, and contracts were developed, with clear deliverables and milestones.

4 Evaluation terms of reference and framework

27. The overall objective of this evaluation was to provide MPI with evaluative feedback on the prototypes to enable discussions on what the learning and parameters for a business-as-usual programme would be. As part of this, answers were sought to the following Key Evaluation Questions:
1. How and in what ways have the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects assisted Māori land owners to overcome the challenges to increasing productivity?
 2. To what extent have the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects generated 'public value' and delivered on MPI's Our Strategy 2030 and Government Priorities?
 3. Which new ways of working for MPI have worked well and not well, and why (considering different contexts, constraints and resources)?
 4. What are the learnings and parameters for a business-as-usual programme?
28. The evaluation used Bennett's Hierarchy as a framework to identify the higher order outcomes and separate these from the inputs, activities and outputs, as shown in the following diagram.

Figure 2: Application of Bennett's Hierarchy to the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects



Evaluation approach

29. Engagement with prototype participants to collect information commenced in early 2012. MPI evaluation staff collected feedback early in the project, from mid-July to mid-August 2013, and this served as baseline data. Follow-up data was then collected from late November to early December 2013, which was prior to project completion in all but one project.
30. All interviews with representatives of the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects were undertaken by MPI staff working with the projects. A mix of methods was used for data collection – including face-to-face, telephone and interviews by email.
31. Prototype participants were sent an electronic copy of the questionnaire to complete. The MPI or MPSP relationship manager then met with each participant to discuss the purpose of the questionnaire and work through any questions they had difficulty interpreting. Participants had the option of completing the questionnaire kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (face-to-face), by telephone or by email. The MPI team for each prototype also completed a questionnaire themselves and submitted all surveys to the MPSP Advice Team for collation. This mixed-method approach provided a flexible, time-effective approach to data collection for both prototype participants and MPI staff.
32. Similar questions were used for the baseline and follow-up surveys to enable comparability of final results with baseline results. The survey asked participants to provide:
 - a rating of the information and capability they had before the prototype and how this affected their decision making in practice
 - a rating of their current relationship with MPI
 - a rating of their expectations of the prototype projects.
33. The survey asked MPI staff working with participants:
 - how MPI rated their ability, prior to the prototype, to assist the participants in improving performance of their land
 - what the MPI staff's expectations for the prototypes were.
34. There were only a small number of self-completion questionnaires:
 - for the baseline: 13 responses across the six projects from prototype participants and eight responses from MPI staff
 - for the follow-up: there are six responses across the five remaining "live" projects from prototype participants; one response from an external stakeholder and eight responses from MPI staff. The reason for two prototypes not being included is that one was completed by mid-2013 and the other one had minimal work done (but was part of a two pronged project where one part continued).

35. Given the small number of total responses and the uneven distribution of responses across the projects, the decision was made to treat these findings qualitatively. In February 2014, in order to obtain additional depth of information for the reporting and help triangulate some of the findings from the self-completion questionnaires, further information was collected by the evaluation team from the MPI teams working with the prototype projects. This included:
- a sense-making session of two hours duration with 12 members of the MPSP team
 - seven in-depth, one-hour interviews that focused on learnings from individual prototype projects.
36. This report covers feedback from prototype participants and MPI staff, and it includes findings from the total dataset – that is data from the baseline and the follow-up round of interviews.

Important consideration in reading this evaluation report

Originally the reporting was planned to be developed internally by MPI with support from an external evaluator in the role of advisor or critical friend. However, due to personnel changes the reporting has been developed by the external evaluators using data primarily collected by MPI staff. The evaluators have not had any contact with the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects for this evaluation.

Making evaluative judgements

37. An evaluation-specific methodology⁵ was used for the evaluation, and the data available was synthesised using a generic evaluative rubric to build layers of evidence⁶ from which to make an assessment of value, merit and worth of contribution of the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects.
38. The generic rubric provided an explicit basis for evaluating progress and specified for each of the key evaluation questions a range of levels of performance rating: poor, adequate, good, very good and excellent. Each data source was converted into a rating. The following table briefly outlines the process used to make those conversions.

⁵ For further information on what constitutes an 'evaluation specific methodology' see the following publications:

Davidson, E.J (2013) Evaluation-Specific Methodology: the methodologies that are distinctive to evaluation. GenuineEvaluation. Retrieved 20 December 2013 from <http://genuineevaluation.com/evaluation-specific-methodology-the-methodologies-that-are-distinctive-to-evaluation/>

King, J., McKegg, K., Oakden, J. & Wehipeihana, N. (2013) Rubrics: A Method for Surfacing Values and Improving the Credibility of Evaluation. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation*, 9:21, 11-20.

Scriven, M. (2008). A summative evaluation of RCT methodology: & an alternative approach to causal research. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation*, 5, 11-24.

⁶ Scriven, M. (2008). A summative evaluation of RCT methodology: & an alternative approach to causal research. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation*, 5, 11-24.

Table 2: Generic rubric and synthesis process

Rating	Qualitative data
Excellent: (Always)	Clear example of exemplary performance or great practice: no weaknesses
Very good: (Almost Always)	Very good to excellent performance on virtually all aspects; strong overall but not exemplary; no weaknesses of any real consequence
Good: (Mostly, with some exceptions)	Reasonably good performance overall; might have a few slight weaknesses but nothing serious
Adequate: (Sometimes, with quite a few exceptions)	Fair performance, some serious, but non-fatal weaknesses on a few aspects
Insufficient evidence	No clear evidence available that the aspect of performance in question has occurred
Poor: Never (or occasionally with clear weaknesses evident)	Clear evidence of unsatisfactory functioning; serious weaknesses across the board on crucial aspects

5 Detailed evaluation findings

39. This section of the report provides detailed analysis of the evaluation findings. Each of the four Key Evaluation Questions (see Section 5) is addressed in turn.
40. The following dashboard shows that overall MPI staff were able to work in partnership with Māori land owners to support them to take steps towards improving the productivity of their land, and so the programme is rated as making a **worthwhile and valuable** contribution overall.
41. Specifically, the evaluation found the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects demonstrated:
- there was evidence the Prototypes assisted Māori land owners to overcome challenges to increasing productivity and so they were rated good
 - there was some evidence that the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects contributed to generating public value and that they made steps towards delivering on MPI’s *Our Strategy 2030* and Government priorities, and so they were rated adequate. The exceptions were due to the short timeframe for the prototype projects.
 - and there was clear evidence that MPI’s new ways of working worked well for Māori land owners, and so they were rated very good.

Table 3: Dashboard summary overall rating of the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects

	Poor	Insufficient evidence	Adequate	Good	Very good	Excellent
Overall rating						
Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects assisted Māori land owners to overcome challenges to increasing productivity						
Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects contributed to generating public value and delivered on MPI’s <i>Our Strategy 2030</i> and Government Priorities						
New ways of working for MPI worked well for Māori land owners						

Question 1: Assisting Māori land owners to overcome challenges

42. This section of the report explores the benefits to the groups in taking part in the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects to overcome challenges. The specific challenges being referred to are finding ways to:
- consolidate multiple owners into a mandated governance entity with effective decision making

- achieve the economic scale needed to support profitable agribusiness
 - access or build the capability needed to grow agribusiness productivity and profitability.
43. Overall, **Māori land owners** reported **positive progress** was made in assisting them **to overcome challenges to increase productivity** as a result of the projects.
44. There was mostly, with some exceptions, evidence the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects assisted Māori land owners to overcome challenges to increasing productivity, and so the projects were rated as making a good contribution for this dimension. For instance, there was clear evidence that as a result of the Prototype projects many of the groups had:
- built new relationships and strengthened relationships with each other and the industries/sectors of interest; cementing some of these relationships with formal agreements
 - had the opportunity to envision greater possibilities than had previously been on their horizons
 - new or improved governance arrangements that support effective and timely decision making and secured immediate and future investment of capital, resources and advice
 - been supported to grow sector specific knowledge, particularly around land productivity options and a structured way of assessing the potential of the land
 - had the opportunity to engage in considered and robust processes and gained increased confidence to enquire, engage, and problem solve independently and with experts, to make decisions about optimal land use
 - strengthened and reaffirmed their governance 'mandate', garnering more support and interest from land owners and the community as a result of 'showcasing' the progress and achievements of projects.
45. The following quote outlines the kind of challenges that some of the groups were facing:

For Māori organisations such as ours here in [region] and in terms of agriculture, we are far behind in any kind of benchmark or monitoring system on land productivity. The notion of this is hard to overcome in a mindset, let alone physically implement. When people have been at the bottom of the ladder for so long it becomes almost habit. Not to mention the multiple ownership issues, which can cast another weight on the effort to lift productivity. [Participant]

Building relationships

46. There was evidence that the groups built new relationships and strengthened relationships with each other and their industry or sector

through the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects. Both the groups and MPI staff observed that the projects supported Māori land owner representatives to build new relationships with specialists or enhanced their existing relationships with experts as well as with others in the sector, as illustrated in the following quotes.

Through the help of [organisation] and MPI, consultants have been made available to [our] people to gain a better understanding on how to increase performance of their land. The information from the consultants or experts have given the people better choices on how to maintain their land at a high standard. [Participant]

[Through] the connections and the networks that have developed because of our interaction with them, [Iwi] are starting to share stories of that work with other Iwi. ... [And] it is not just intra Iwi connections, it is the industry connections that they are now sharing. Other Iwi are being able to leverage off any new relationships that the Iwi we are working with have formed. [MPI staff]

47. The groups and MPI staff reported that through the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects the groups were able to strengthen their relationships with one another as they looked for ways to increase the productivity of their land by forming alliances.

[MPI] staff are exceptionally helpful, engaging and went well out of their way in order to meet our needs in this project. I can't speak highly [enough] of their support and contribution to providing the opportunities, to connect with other successful enterprises within the farming sector in order for us to better understand ourselves within this environment (farming) and the greater potential we have to develop our asset. [Participant]

With all the information provided to us thus far, examples of other Māori Trust Land Blocks - how they are run, different options we could use, different templates that we could adapt to our situation, etc, the MPI team has far exceeded my expectation. [Participant]

The support received by the Trust from the MPI team to date has been incredible, relating to both indirect and direct benefits. From the simple votes of confidence to the invitation to [event] finalists [field] days and more directly the funding of services relating to planning the [business activity] and ensuring the Trust values are maintained. The MPI team have also assisted in broadening networks and accessing the expertise much needed by Trusts such as ours. [Participant]

48. These quotes from MPI staff describe how the groups were able to strengthen their relationships with one another as they looked for ways to increase the productivity of their land:

It was [the realisation] that... 'We can actually do this, because we have met people now who will help walk us through the process.' And having a relationship with [person] really solidified to them that they weren't alone in this. And that they actually could call him at any time. And [person] ... presented the structure, which

(What was most valuable was the access to inspiring examples, information and expertise.

[Participant]

What MPI appear to have is extensive relationships, which gives them an ability to connect the right people who can then provide the expertise.

[Participant]

gave a very clear map as to how they structure their business; the shareholdings. [It was] all-inclusive of that shareholding component: how they work with their shareholders, how they take the shareholders along with the journey. And I think that piece there really gave some satisfaction to the Iwi that, 'We can have a business model that actually isn't just straight business. It does take our shareholders for the journey.' [MPI staff]

Expanding the vision of land potential

49. Some land owners, whose background and expertise was in areas other than land development, were constrained by their lack of knowledge about the potential options for land usage. There was a clear benefit in the groups having the opportunity to envision greater possibilities than had previously been on their horizon. MPI sponsored and organised visits to several Māori agribusinesses through its wider networks.
50. This enabled Māori land owners to see what other successful Māori businesses were doing and to see the potential for their own situation. It also exposed Māori land owners to new networks and broadened their vision of what was possible; that is, it encouraged them to think bigger – and even globally – as well as giving them an increased awareness of the need for local and international expertise and advice.
51. Supported by MPI, projects variously began to develop relationships with other Māori agribusinesses and other sector organisations. The latent potential at times provided useful leverage and an incentive for members of the group to work together.

Currently we are able to access information through the different working groups who are assisting us in our vision to help [Iwi] become more self-sufficient. We have found that all information has been shared and [is] easy to access. [Participant]

Iwi got to see what other Māori were doing in [industry]. And [they] were literally blown away at the level of [sector] farming that was going on. And they were filled with so much inspiration. They really knew that they could give this a good go. And that this is where they needed to be. But also the conversations occurred between different Iwi members, so you had one Iwi talking to another Iwi. The whole vibe just changed. [MPI staff]

When you take people out of their comfort zones... a bunch of people that you know or you are kind of acquainted with, you generally tend to gravitate to each other. And that kind of just helped... [They realised] we are not talking to you as one iwi and you as the other, we are actually talking to you as owners of this asset. So the language changed as well. [MPI staff]

New governance arrangements and securing investment

52. One of the issues that traditionally hampered productive development of Māori land was the lack of an effective governance model that was acceptable to multiple land owners. The challenge was not only to identify a suitable governance vehicle, but at times it also involved finding ways to mitigate or manage longstanding historical and contemporary grievances and issues (not necessarily about the land in question), in order to be able to achieve an acceptable and mandated governance entity.
53. For example, the aim of one project was to establish a collaborative Iwi governance structure to support the transition of land blocks that were being managed as a single farm under Crown ownership and control, to two Iwi as part of a treaty settlement arrangement. A key challenge here was the shift from an individual Iwi-focused benefit to focus on the collective benefit for both Iwi. It required new ways of thinking and a belief in the benefits of working together to identify an optimal co-governance entity.
54. In this case, MPI brokered the use of an external facilitator and workshops to assist the two Iwi to grapple with a range of issues. They tested a series of possible scenarios and as part of this discussed attitudes to land sale, balancing cultural and economic priorities, and under what circumstances each Iwi operate would individually or collectively.
- A core driver was the belief that working together is more powerful for our people.
[Participant]*
55. The discussions clarified and strengthened their respective understanding of each other as a foundation for shared governance. The outcome of the workshop was that Iwi were able to articulate a shared vision, identify common driver, and agree relationship principles – and they reached an agreed position. As a result they drafted a detailed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two Iwi. Once this was in place, the two Iwi then entered into discussion with their preferred joint venture partner.
56. A second prototype project also resulted in a joint venture partnership. While the land owners had the financial resources to go it alone, they didn't want to put all their eggs into one basket, and so they developed a joint venture proposal which they tendered out. MPI supported the land owners to engage with potential partners and to assess their respective proposals in line with their tender process. One of the potential partners introduced into the selection process by MPI quickly emerged as a forerunner, and in December 2013 the joint venture agreement was signed.

The joint venture partner is putting up cash for the conversion. They will be a partner in the entity for the first six years and are bringing governance expertise. They will probably have input into who they hire for the management of the farm. So they are an investment partner.

[MPI staff]

Increased knowledge and improved decision-making capability

57. Both the groups and MPI staff observed that the processes used during the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects supported land owners to:
- grow sector-specific knowledge particularly around the productivity options available to them
 - be involved in the decision making regarding possible options that might be considered – using a structured way of assessing the potential of the land
 - have the final say in the development of proposed approaches.

We needed specialist advice to grow our own knowledge base. We are learning as we go by assigning portfolios to individual trustees... We have had to self-direct ourselves and self-motivate ourselves. We have to show leadership in what we understand about the industry. [Participant]

58. Between the benchmark study and end of the project, the group participants' rating for their current understanding of the options available to increase the performance [that is, productivity and profitability] of the land improved from adequate to very good. The group participants' rating of their confidence in making decisions about the future utilisation of the land based on the information they have available today also improved, from adequate to 'good'.

59. MPI staff observed that the processes used helped the groups to reach whānau and include them in the decision making regarding the potential of their land.

We have that ability to connect right down into whānau and manage that... Because the land owners are whānau. And so the conversations are different too, shifting from issues and challenges to opportunities and potential. [MPI staff]

60. It was evident that through the prototype projects the groups gained an in-depth understanding of their land's potential and could use a more structured method for assessing this potential. At the initial benchmark stage, group participants rated opportunities available to them to overcome difficulties to accessing information and capability (such as people with the right skills and capital) as adequate. This had shifted to good by the end of the project.

At the beginning, capturing this particular person's interest was a challenge. As the project progressed and the team learnt more, the potential started to become real. [MPI staff]

Robust processes support decision-making capability

61. The groups also had the opportunity to build capability by engaging in more considered or robust processes with the support from experts. This enabled Māori land owners to assess information about a wide range of farming options and make their own decisions as to the best ways forward.

The introduction of an independent person with farming experience who was able to give us a hands-on experience and sharing of knowledge and information and his own assessment of ways to potentially improve on the current farm operations, using evidence-based demonstrations and techniques that he is currently developing and operating with. [Participant]

And I think that [increased confidence] also helped enrich the conversations. As I said, farming was not their forte. It wasn't where they came from. [Their expertise was in] commercial, economic or social [ventures]. Those were their key interests. But you actually have to understand farming to be able to make informed decisions... Initially they were thinking because they didn't have the capability at that point in time, or the understanding, they were looking at changing the land use. [MPI staff]

62. Changes not only occurred in the approaches to farming but also in the approaches to governance and how Iwi leaders might keep their people informed as the project progressed. MPI staff observed that clearer role definitions occurred within the groups during the projects, which enabled wider and more effective feedback to hapu and marae.

The greatest gain that they [one of the prototypes] have actually got is reflecting on their own governance structure. And they have realised a whole lot of other things amongst themselves around governance and feeding back to the hapu and the marae. So they have actually informed a whole lot more people by getting clear about their own role. [MPI staff]

63. There was evidence the groups acquired increased confidence to enquire, engage and problem-solve – independently and with experts – and to make decisions about their land. MPI staff were able to describe the behaviour change that took place:

So historically we would have one of the Iwi members from [Iwi] who would lead and dominate the conversation. That changed [to] where everybody was taking an active part in where they would want that discussion to go... So they were there because ... this is a great opportunity. [Before] they just couldn't ... picture the process or see how they could connect and add value. [MPI staff]

Showcasing project achievements reaffirms governance mandate

64. Some of the projects strengthened and reaffirmed their governance mandate, garnering more support and interest from land owners and the community as a result of showcasing progress and achievements. There have been a number of opportunities for this, such as visits by Ministers, open days and the signing of joint venture agreements. Project leaders, land owners and MPI staff experience a strong sense of pride when they are part of wider regional development forums or communications that recognise and affirm their success. Importantly, these provide visible and tangible evidence for Māori land owners of successful outcomes and increase their confidence in governors and managers – and the strategic and operational direction for land use.

And when we were sitting at the runanga, after we had done all of the field visits, during the speeches and formalities they [participating Māori land owners] were all beaming. And the real bonus of the open day was to see all the land owners there; for them to see it's finally happening. [MPI staff]

65. These types of events have also provided opportunities to engage with land owners who were reticent, sceptical or opposed to the land development options – to build bridges, to heal or improve relationships and in the longer term support discussion about land development.
66. MPI staff place a lot of significance on the achievement of agreements between Māori land owners and with other organisations, to support more economic land use. Some examples follow.

Case examples of Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects reaching important agreements

In one instance a group comprising two Iwi reached a memorandum of understanding to work together with an outside organisation in a farming venture. The outside organisation will manage the operation of the business until the Iwi have built sufficient capacity to take over the day-to-day operation themselves.

There are two memorandums of understanding. The first one is between the two Iwi. Both Iwi have agreed to work together. That's signed off.

And then the two Iwi developed a memorandum of understanding between themselves and [outside organisation], and that has also been signed off....So the memorandum of understanding between the Iwi and [outside organisation] sets the foundations for how they will work together to progress a joint venture. And so that is the process that they are in at the moment. It's around what does the joint venture look like.

And it's been difficult because it means changing the way in which both parties have worked historically. So [outside organisation] has a template that they have used with previous partners, that doesn't quite suit the way in which the Iwi want to now work. Because in their long-term vision [they want to take over managing the farm], right now they don't have the capacity or the capability to manage the farm. They are quite open about that. But they are working towards taking over the management. And so in their mind that's in their plan of seven to ten years. [MPI staff]

In another instance, a group of multiple owners developed a mandated governance entity to consolidate land and convert to a more profitable form of farming.

[This project] has led to this joint venture between [Iwi] and [organisation], on the farm. At the... end of last year, [Iwi] had a celebration around the signing of that joint venture. They also opened up the farm; so they invited all of their constituents; opened the doors. Said, 'Look, this is fantastic. Look at what we are doing: we are signing with [organisation]. And you can also come and see how the development of the farm has [occurred].' ... They get to see, feel and touch it.

That was a real bonus to this project, because when we talk about the highs and lows, whether the project would proceed was tied to those negotiations to [organisation]. And then around the joint venture. So there were a lot of times that we thought this may not go in these time-frames. But it is going. And it's a great achievement for them. [MPI staff]

In a further instance, a group decided to lease the rights to a business opportunity associated with their land to a third party, and they managed to negotiate an optimal solution for all. This was testing, as individuals were offered deals by individual companies but elected to work together within a wider group.

One of the things we helped the trustees to do was build into the contract with the company, a requirement that the trustees got access to all the relevant information from the company. This meant that the trustees could stand up with authority to report to their people, rather than having to rely on the company to do this for them. This was not a standard clause in the company's usual contract with land

Another thing to note was that there was a lot of pressure on the trustees from the [competing] companies... Different companies tried to pluck individual trustees off one by one, rather than following the proper governance channels.

[MPI staff]

67. These examples also provide a clear demonstration of where Iwi and Māori land owners built capacity to optimise the new opportunities that were identified during this project.

68. This following example demonstrates how MPI staff found the balance – between supporting Māori land owners who wanted to move more quickly towards decision points, while at the same time ensuring that they did not unduly influence the process.

Case study of accelerating a Māori Agribusiness Prototype project

In one project, a group of land owners faced two main challenges to achieving their aspirations for their land: they had limited capability and capacity, and lacked a unifying governance structure.

The first step was for MPI to assist the land owners in securing the support of an investment partner. The next step was to seek landowner agreement to establish a steering committee, comprising trustees for the land owners, MPI and the investment partner. Decision-making power remained at all times with the land owners.

Through the steering committee MPI was able to support the land owners to accelerate their decision-making process. This included:

- putting together a brief for a feasibility study of possible land development options
- developing a brief for assistance with identifying options for improving governance, including helping the land owners identify their “must have” items
- identifying experts with the skills and expertise to deliver on the briefs
- developing criteria to assess the experts, such as:
 - reputation for integrity and results
 - good understanding of the brief
 - good communicators who are able to explain technical information clearly to a range of audiences.
- short-listing applicants
- encouraging the experts to walk the land with the land owners – to take their understanding of the brief beyond that which was on paper
- peer review of draft reports to ensure the land owners’ aspirations and needs were addressed
- practical guidance to help the land owners to better understand the economic, cultural and environmental impacts of the land development concept
- practical guidance for the land owners to help them better understand the level of commitment and participation required from them to move on a pathway towards a new governance structure. *[MPI staff]*

Question 2: Contribution to public value

69. Public value in the context of the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects included: new knowledge being used by Māori land owners beyond the projects; increased capability of Māori land owners spreading beyond the projects; and increased productivity of resources spreading beyond the projects.

70. There was some evidence that the Prototype projects made some contribution to generating public value by making small steps towards delivering on MPI's *Our Strategy 2030* and Government Priorities. Thus, the projects were rated as making an adequate contribution for this dimension, with potential for further value. The exceptions were due to the short timeframe for the prototype projects.

New knowledge is just starting to be used beyond the projects

71. There was evidence that several projects had found ways to amalgamate small land blocks to achieve performance that would not have been possible in isolation. As the projects are still working through the mechanics, the knowledge is just starting to be used by others. It is not yet being widely promulgated, as is evidenced by this report anonymising the projects.

Increased capability of Māori land owners spreads

72. There was evidence of direct sharing from the projects with nearby Māori land owners about the new ways they are using their land or techniques to increase productivity of existing use. It was acknowledged that Māori capability would take time to build. At the outset, several Māori land owners elected to work in partnership with other stakeholders with existing capability while longer term strategies were developed to support the longer-term transfer of expertise to those within their own Iwi. MPI staff were credited with playing a key role in the development and brokering of these relationships and partnerships to support more effective and efficient capability building – at times by supporting other stakeholders to engage with Māori land owners. Furthermore there was also evidence of indirect sharing – where awareness of the benefits of the process used by the projects encouraged other Iwi and Māori land owners to consider engaging in similar processes.

Increased productivity of resources beyond the projects

73. There is emerging evidence that the development of a Māori land block or blocks can act as a nucleus for further blocks to link to in future. Māori land owners talked of the desire to increase both the number of blocks within amalgamated land blocks and boost the blocks' overall productivity.
74. There was evidence that the projects supported:
- the development of MPI's knowledge, skills and models and the ability to transfer those on to other projects
 - MPI staff built an awareness and understanding of the ways MPI can provide expertise and support to Māori land owners and how and in what ways MPI can support them to develop productive and viable farming assets
 - increased credibility of MPI, so Māori land owners are now more likely to initiate contact and engage with the organisation

- the development and brokering of relationships and partnerships to support more effective and efficient use of resources.
75. The rest of this section explores each of the areas of public value listed above in more detail.
76. Participants rated their current relationship with MPI as very good both at the time of the benchmark study and again at the end of the project. Based on comments from participants, there was clear evidence that MPI staff from the MPSP team had excellent knowledge, skills and models to build relationships and work effectively with Iwi and Māori land owners.
77. There were a number of aspects to that knowledge and skills base. One key aspect was that MPI staff were able to assess when Iwi and Māori land owners are ready for change and prepared to engage with them.

Over the last two years, with no professional support guidance or experience, the trustees instilled the motivation to drive ourselves into this industry. Our knowledge was nil. This became a trial of tribulations, at times testing our resilience and questioning our motives. Fortunately, through MPI funds, a project [was] initiated [that provided] timely, professional intervention and investigations. [Participant]

78. During the evaluation, it became evident that different kinds of project management and support were needed, depending on the state of readiness for change. Readiness is made up of two parts: capability, which is defined as farming expertise, and clarity, which is defined as knowledge of the options available to them either in the choice of farming sector to pursue or the options to increase productivity. Projects generally fell into the first three of the four following categories:

- had neither the capability nor the clarity
- had the capability but not the clarity
- had the clarity but did not have the capability
- had capability and the clarity.

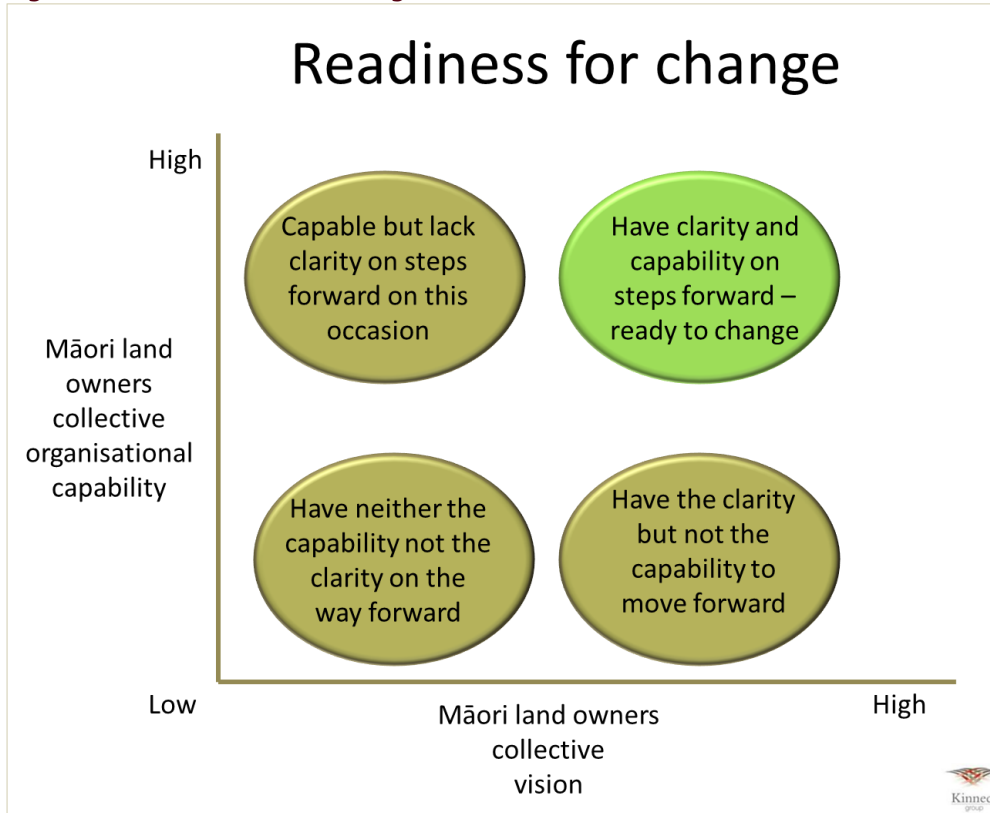
[Before this project] the land had just been returned to the Trust's management and was in a poor, run-down state.

Now, 18 months after the management returned, major land development programmes have been put in place and therefore it is becoming more productive – just from the planned development programmes.

[Participant]

79. The following diagram summarises the variation in support that MPI provided to collective groups of Māori land owners at various times. MPI staff aimed to support the prototype projects to reach the top right-hand quadrant.

Figure 3: Readiness for change



80. It was clear that MPI staff were adept in helping cater for the diversity of the group’s aspirations and interests.

Key learning was that options had to be developed to cater for the wide variation in ownership, management and capability amongst participants. Would have been difficult to plan for initially, and important to take some options to trusts and managers – and customise to what works for each situation. Development of the role of a strong advisory group. [Participant]

81. There was also evidence that MPI staff built an awareness and understanding of the ways MPI could provide expertise and support to Māori land owners. The groups reported being better informed about who MPI is and how and in what way MPI can support Iwi to develop productive assets. Participants’ ratings improved from adequate to very good during the life of the project for the support they received from MPI to access the information and capability they need to improve the performance of the land.

In reference to MPI it is through [intermediary organisation] that we have the confidence in the relationship. There is newness in MPI in their offering of upskilling trustees and the skilled services they can offer to sharpen our business. [Participant]

MPI is well-placed to support local projects based on internal knowledge, information and skills. [Participant]

[With the] expertise provided by MPI, [the] whole-of-farm assessment (by DairyNZ and others), visits to other corporate farmers (Māori and non-Māori) – supported by MPI, [we are] increasing our collective (Iwi Team) knowledge and understanding. [Participant]

82. MPI has enhanced its credibility, which means Iwi are now more likely to initiate contact and engage with the organisation.

MPI (Māori Sector) support has been crucial to our outstanding progress and success to date. Without it we would not have progressed to where we are today, with the certainty and confidence we now have about where we are going tomorrow. [Participant]

The relationship was already excellent and has only been enhanced with time. MPI have played a very important role and have done so from an enabler approach versus a 'Do what we tell you; we know best' approach. [Participant]

83. Group participants rated the engagement with MPI as excellent in creating value to them as Māori land owners (such as an increase in productivity and money available for cultural purposes).

MPI have provided a framework, facilitated relationships and deployed funding. It isn't clear to me that MPI can or should do more than this. What MPI appear to have is extensive relationships which gives them an ability to connect the right people who can then provide the expertise. MPI have been very good in supporting the project and showing flexibility and pragmatism to changes in the project which were unforeseen at the start. [Participant]

A great deal easier than at the beginning of the process. Excellent contacts and networks [have been] established. [Participant]

84. The groups appreciated the opportunities provided by MPI staff to develop a range of relationships and partnerships which support more effective and efficient use of their resources.

The MPSP team have supported the Trust directly in [working towards] our aspirations through discussions, technical advisors, financial assistance and their presence at events. The MPSP team have also given encouraging support through initiatives such as ... events, [region] Māori Agri Forum etc. so that those within our Trust have an idea of what context we are working in and what we need to do to reach the vision of the land sustaining its people. [Participant]

Very exciting to be part of this whole kaupapa. We can see a better future for our people and their lands. [Participant]

The project has definitely progressed in a way that would have not been possible without MPI investment and overall input. [Participant]

85. Participants believed it was likely that the models and ways MPI staff worked with Māori land owners could be transferred to other regions and sectors.

[There will be] expansion of the project beyond [region] so that significant areas included are or will be [other regions]. [Also] active promotion of the project to the post-harvest sector. More active promotion of the project and engagement with Te Tumu Paeroa and inclusion of some of their [farming type]. [Participant]

The model i.e. bespoke consultancy advice in a structured system has significant opportunity to lift productivity and profitability. The gains are such that the system should be scalable and transferable to other land users. [Participant]

Question 3: Testing MPI's approach

86. It is important to acknowledge that for many MPSP staff, the approaches applied for the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects were not actually new ways of working. From their perspective, these projects drew on a tried and tested relationship-based approach that focused on understanding the needs and aspirations of those they were working with, in this case Māori. MPSP staff were open-minded about exploring opportunities for partnering and collaboration, and continuing with conversations even when they are challenging. Staff from MPSP also explained that this open approach had worked previously to increase Māori participation in fisheries management through the development of Forum and Iwi Fish Plans and to improve Māori engagement in the biosecurity system. The approach is, therefore, a new way for MPI to work in this space.
87. The evaluators found MPI has found a way of working that overcomes what were considered seemingly intractable challenges to raising productivity and profitability of some Māori-owned land. MPI staff helped Māori land owners to step through a planning process which explores their options, including the advantages and disadvantages.
88. Six projects that demonstrate possible prototypes were established, and these involved a range of land-holding structures including Māori freehold land, tribal land and Treaty settlement land. The property sizes ranged from small land blocks under 100 hectares (ha) to ones that spanned up to 200,000 ha⁷. Land utilisation and level of productivity also varied, from unproductive recreational use to high-performing farms. All six groups faced key challenges related to accessing the right capability to grow the productivity and profitability of their agribusiness. Two groups were also interested in ways to build economic scale without amalgamating ownership.
89. The following table outlines the key areas of focus, MPI support and key outcomes from the projects.

⁷ Tribal rohe.

Table 4: Summary of Māori Agribusiness Prototype

Project	Area of focus	MPI support resulted in the following project outputs and outcomes
Project 1	Successful transfer of land asset from Crown to Iwi as part of a Treaty settlement, along with establishment of a partnership to maintain productivity.	MPI provided access to expert advice and information to enable informed decision making by Māori land owners to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a formal partnership agreement amongst Iwi, and between Iwi and a farm management partner • greater knowledge of the financial and operational performance of the land asset • compare and consider alternative land use options.
Project 2	Shift from leasing out to establishment of a collective management structure for the land blocks to enable a dairy farm conversion.	MPI provided access to expert advice and information to enable informed decision making by Māori land owners to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feasibility study on a dairy venture that considered environmental aspects and owners' cultural needs • greater knowledge of the business structures to enable collective management while retaining original ownership.
Project 3	Convert from leasing out to dairy farming to raise productivity of an area of land.	MPI provided access to expert advice and information to enable informed decision making by Māori land owners to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a dairy farm plan that considers the environmental, social and cultural needs of their shareholders • obtain greater knowledge amongst governance of the technical and financial considerations for the dairy conversion and operating entity.
Project 4	Consolidate disparate beehives on an area of land and further develop manuka honey production.	MPI provided access to expert advice and information to enable informed decision making by Māori land owners to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a stock-take of current land assets to identify those suitable for manuka honey production • a feasibility study of surrounding Māori land assets to identify those suitable for a collaborative manuka honey venture.
Project 5	Develop beekeeping and manuka honey production through a license or lease arrangement with a beekeeping company.	MPI provided access to expert advice and information to enable informed decision making by Māori land owners to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a feasibility study and financial analysis of a possible bee venture.
Project 6(a)	Invest in raising productivity through high-performance orchard management and/or introduction of higher value kiwifruit varieties.	MPI provided access to expert advice and information to enable informed decision making by Māori land owners to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase production, performance and profitability of Māori owned orchards based on the development and implementation of a high performance orchard management plan. • large scale productivity increases and information sharing through the establishment of regional forums of Māori orchardists (BOP, Gisborne, Northland). • develop governance and technical capability.
Project 6(b)	Options for working with Māori dairy farmers to raise productivity through expert assistance and mentoring.	MPI provided access to expert advice and resources to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scope a project aimed at designing and building a customised service for Māori dairy farmers.

90. As the table above shows, the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects tested a range of different contexts, needs and opportunities facing Māori land owners. Available evidence indicated **MPI were highly effective in working in partnership** with Māori land owners and a range of other stakeholders in these varied contexts.
91. Key aspects MPI's approach were the way they assisted Māori Land owners by firstly **forming effective working relationships** with them. Ways this occurred are outlined as follows:
- There was clear evidence that MPI staff demonstrated **high levels of skill in building relationships**. They were highly skilled at bringing together Māori land owners with experts in multiple fields, to transfer knowledge and build networks. Project readiness and the identification of project leaders as important selection criteria For instance, MPI, Iwi and Māori land owners explored partnership opportunities - which at times were to involve third parties.
 - It was clearly evident that MPI staff had a **nuanced understanding of Māori land owners' values** and this was an important enabler for establishing and building relationships and for envisioning possible opportunities that resonated with Māori communities. It made it possible for MPI staff to support Māori land owners within a range of appropriately nuanced engagement processes. However, MPI staff working on the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects believed that while an understanding of tikanga was helpful, anyone focused on building meaningful relationships could work effectively with Māori, if they seek support to engage with Iwi and Māori in culturally appropriate ways.
 - There were multiple examples of MPI staff involved in the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects being **highly skilled at working collaboratively** with each other – they presented as a cohesive team to the Māori land owners they worked with and to other stakeholders including government agencies (central and local) and industry organisations.
 - Māori land owners also believed the **projects helped build awareness and understanding of MPI**. Because of the projects, Māori land owners reported becoming better informed about who MPI are, and how and in what ways MPI could support them to develop productive and viable farming assets. Māori land owners surveyed also reported being more likely to initiate contact and engage with MPI in the future.
92. While this section has provided an overview of MPI's new ways of working that have worked well, it does not identify *which* ways worked best. Further, while some isolated challenges occurred, there were no specific patterns identified of aspects that did not work well.
93. Based on the small sample sizes, it was not possible to identify whether the different ways of working for the various projects were more or less

effective. However, the range of flexible and adaptive approaches used by MPI staff on the projects appeared to work within their contexts. Therefore, the evaluators recommend documenting the suite of options and ways of working used during this project, as they all have promise as being flexible and responsive to needs of Māori land owners.

Ways of working

94. Participants appreciated that MPI staff took the time to carefully explore the interests and aspirations of the groups.

Our relationship with MPI is new, and both parties have been unclear as to what can be done and what can't be done. Initially we engaged with MPI staff for a korero. Expectations were unclear and not much happened, then a new conversation was started and again expectations were unclear. As this is a new approach to business for MPI, it is understandable that expectations and realities are being tested. Despite this, the relationship with MPI staff is excellent and communications are open and positive. [Participant]

95. MPI staff reflected that visits were a valuable start point for the projects and gave them a much better understanding of the best ways to support Māori land owners in different contexts.

We got there a lot quicker because actually it was obvious for us to just go out there and talk to people and find out exactly what was going on. [MPI staff]

We humbled ourselves actually. We acknowledged that we were new into that space. And I think that our people enjoyed the humility. And the openness for contact directly to Wellington when they wanted it. And having someone local in the region. That's what I think has been a key difference for us. [MPI staff]

So whilst we had a refined internal focus, when you go out there you can appreciate everything and be able to decipher what is in and what is out. [MPI staff]

So if we are going to have a programme to support them to do that, what exactly does that mean? What is it exactly they need to do to achieve that? And therefore what do we need to be able to do to support that? And not just theorise what we think that might be. [MPI staff]

Importance of relationships

96. MPI staff acknowledged that it was important to establish integrity at the start of discussions with Māori land owners. At times this involved using established networks to broker relationships.

There was integrity established, or you had associated integrity. It's either [based] on work or people that you know. What was key about going out on those site visits was the ability to ground; that grounding aspect. So whether it's Te Reo kaupapa, or whether it's being feet on the ground out there; going to the people. Some real basic concepts that are often overlooked. We have to do that because you can't deliver [otherwise]. We did that through established networks or by association. And that is not necessarily organisational. Sometimes it's [based] on individuals' [relationships]. The thinking around that too was quite a holistic approach in terms of approach. [MPI staff]

97. MPI staff also acknowledged and took account of historical contexts. In many instances this meant that interactions between Iwi leaders and MPI staff started at the level of rangatira-to-rangatira, which helped mandate the process going forward.

Our relationship with MPI has only gotten stronger. Any government groups that you deal with, there is the perception that you cannot trust them. [Participant]

98. From discussions with MPI staff and feedback from the groups, it was clear that the MPI team working on Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects also brought a great deal of cultural expertise and understanding to the projects. Their understanding facilitated an adept and sensitive way of working with Māori that was greatly appreciated.

Without the professional advice we could have continued to be more unsettled. We are currently working through matters but [are] more technically equipped with [a] sound base information, tailored specifically toward our needs and situation. This has been the key learning: what we are able to get out of this is professional advice to influence or aide decision making, to justify the rigour of decisions. [Participant]

Support from those people who understand at a fundamental level the issues and barriers that need to be worked on for the Trust to achieve its goals in [region] is very valuable. The MPSP team are working with groups similar to ours, trying to achieve goals similar to ours, with issues similar to ours, so it has been a help that they can support us ... with a level head, patience and understanding. For Trusts in situations such as ours patience is a must as decisions have to go through various levels before they are approved.[Participant]

99. In addition, MPI staff appeared to be very effective in brokering relationships with other organisations and entities, and with experts that might support the initiatives. MPI staff supported Māori land owners to obtain access to experts with an extensive range of knowledge. Typically all the groups bought into this – but a critical factor was the expert’s ability to connect to engage with Māori land owners – at all the different levels. Groups expected expert advisors to be able to convey and communicate information to Māori land owners in a way that made sense, without talking down to them.

The conclusions and recommendations are very explicit, clearly outlined, it provides the reader with choice and assess risk. It also provides a clear message to us, 'Learn how to walk before you run'. [Participant]

100. MPI staff were careful to find expertise that “felt right” for the groups. And the groups were generally cautious to get the right people for them and many, but not all, preferred to have no-one than an unsuitable person.

It has taken the Trust well over two years to find the right people and resource to commence professional investigations, to aide, guide to spur us on. So it has not been easy. [Participant]

The Trustees are very grateful for the assistance from MPI and fully appreciated the engagement and added value the trust received through [expert].

[Participant].

101. MPI staff believe a likeability or connection factor was a critical aspect of the expert advisor selection and engagement.

There is a likeability factor: they like them or not. And you can see in their body language. In the interim, where there is not that likeability factor and we are still establishing that, we carry the korero. [MPI staff]

102. Where this likeability or connection was not present, relationships with experts could be strained and in one instance broke down completely, as illustrated in the following example.

Example of where relations with an expert broke down

This vignette explains a case where the connection between an expert advisor and one of the groups broke down. MPI staff explained:

At the time we engaged the [expert] we were cognisant that the relationship [between them and] the governance level wasn't quite right... The best case scenario was that we'd get over this hump and things [would] continue. But we always acknowledged that it wasn't going to continue as per our original conversation. [MPI staff]

However, there were some important learnings from this including MPI staff learning the importance of supporting the group to come to their own decision to stop working with the expert. At that point MPI staff managed the contractual obligations with the expert.

So we decided to let things lie a little bit. During that time it was conversations with our [expert]. And it was conversations with the chairman. [Person A] dealt with it at the [governance] level. [Person B] dealt with it at the operational level. And we were very keen not to have those lines blurred. But ensuring that we were talking and connected and saying exactly the same things, [that] kind of helped progress things along. [MPI staff]

MPI staff also acknowledged that the expert advisor had been a key driver at the start of the project, and then the group did go on to find another type of expertise and an approach that helped them meet their aspirations.

At the initial starting of our engagement we needed a key driver who had the technical ability to put things in place. [MPI staff]

Importance of leaders seeing the potential for collaboration

104. MPI staff understood the importance of leaders and leadership in working with the groups generally. MPI staff reflected on who appeared to be the right leaders for the group's process. They observed that sometimes the skills needed for Treaty negotiations are not necessarily the skills that are needed in this more exploratory type of engagement. They also observed that people who come with strong political perspectives may not be helpful in finding ways to collaborate with others in a more collegial way. But they were impressed with the potential they saw within Iwi to think about a wider scale of collaboration.
105. MPI staff understood that it was important to bring everyone on board – and at times this required extra meetings so that everyone heard from a consultant for instance. Furthermore, presentations had to be easily accessible, using simple language.

106. This following vignette describes an observation by MPI staff of one group shifting from operating in a negotiating manner to a collaborating model.

Importance of leaders seeing the potential for collaboration

MPI staff described what Iwi had been through during the Treaty settlement process as being a competitive environment. They reflected that sometimes it was difficult for the same people to transition to working collaboratively.

[In] negotiations, you're almost fighting over the same asset; between each other. So from moving from that space, where you are a competitor, to being able to work side by side for a common goal is nothing short of amazing... And that shift sometimes never happens. Sometimes [it] takes years.

MPI staff observed there was a huge shift in attitudes, and that allowed Iwi to start collaborating.

So going from a negotiation space, into a 'How are we going to work together?' space that has been a huge shift in the attitudes - between Iwi. And [in the] early stages of this project you could sort of start discussing certain parts of a business, and some at the table are still very guarded in their discussions... Now we are seeing free, frank and open conversations. They are willing to share information; willing to put cards on the table.

For one project, MPI staff said it was the ability to see the potential for greater gains from working together that helped two Iwi move quite quickly to doing so for the benefit of all their people. Furthermore, MPI staff believed that once Iwi saw a way to collaborate with others they quickly shifted to thinking of larger scale collaboration with additional Iwi.

But [in] fact that these two Iwi have moved quite fast, in aligning to the bigger picture: what's the best for the community, for the wider Iwi. Because that's where they are thinking. Their thinking is: 'Okay well, starting with us two, but there are three other Iwi here who have assets and resources that will lead to regional economic growth and benefit [for] all our people, as opposed to just [some].' And that mind shift - it's just amazing.

107. MPI staff were adept at identifying and surfacing the untapped leadership potential within the groups – the reluctant leaders who were at times put forward by others to work on the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects. These people turned out to be very effective in supporting the groups to form alliances. These reluctant leaders were described as being knowledgeable, not necessarily putting themselves forward; quiet, not the out-the-front person. They were often from strong whānau who were very involved with their Iwi and with close connections to their marae, an absolute passion for the land and a long-term view for their people.

It's like a reluctant leader. So in this situation others have put them forward... Not the key change agent in the typical sense of the word, but they are a form of a key change agent... on what they say. They are not just exclusive to this space. Which is, I say, one of the key aspects. They are in the [sector] environment; they are helping out here and there. [MPI staff]

The knowledge and relationships that MPI bring to the prototypes

108. There was clear evidence both from Māori land owners and MPI staff that MPI staff were effective in the way they operated as facilitators for the

Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects, on a number of levels. MPI staff were clear their role was to bring information to Māori land owners.

The value of the engagement with MPI is very high, due to MPI being involved with the environment, water, farming, forestry, cultural, etc. MPI has huge expertise in all these areas, which is of significant benefit and value to us in our farm venture. [Participant]

The value that we as a hapu see is if we can have a better future for our Rangitahi whether that be creating job opportunities or making sure that our land is maintained to high standard. MPI have made this available to us through funding or information. [Participant]

So there was a lot of negotiating, and facilitating out, 'Okay so this consultant relates well to [Iwi], yes we get that. But this consultant is well-known in the industry, is credible, has a track record with their work securing finance.' So [it] speaks to the Māori world and to the Pākehā world. [MPI staff]

109. MPI staff saw their role as supporting Māori land owners through ensuring they had the knowledge, networks and relationships to be sufficiently informed to make decisions, and this was valued by the groups.

The MPSP team have supported the Trust directly in our aspirations – through discussions, technical advisors, financial assistance and their presence at events. [Participant]

110. MPI staff reported working behind the scenes to help members of the groups understand the issues so they were in a position to make decisions. MPI staff were able to articulate their clear understanding of the boundaries of what it means to be a public servant and were clear that it was not their role to make decisions on behalf of the land owners.

We are a Government department; we have to work within the constraints. I think we sort of struck that balance quite well. But at the same time, we still drove ahead. We still got things happening, I think, a lot faster than we would have had we not had our focus external. [MPI staff]

111. MPI staff were very clear that their role during this stage was to facilitate and not to direct Māori land owners, who needed to own their own decisions given it was their livelihood at stake. At times this meant allowing for all members to come on board or for a series of meetings to be held instead of one meeting. MPI staff ensured that land owners had sufficient information in a useful format to present back to whānau and supported the land owners to be the face of the project; not the experts, nor themselves.

Built trusted relationships

112. As a result of the way MPI staff worked with Māori land owners, they built trusted relationships where people will engage willingly, listen, share and confide, and that will extend beyond the life of this project. As one MPI staff member reflected, 'You exit the project, not the relationship.'

Our current relationship with the MPI team is very strong, and has got stronger as we forge ahead. We have built up a robust trust with each other. The MPI team are very professional in every aspect and I cannot fault them. [Participant]

Having met, planned and being involved with MPI staff since that time, it's clearly evident that we have come a long way to understanding the MPI business a lot better and to understand what role it plays to initiate and facilitate the development of potential in the farming sector. [Participant]

Acknowledge challenges around balancing MPI resource allocation

113. MPI staff and management acknowledged there were challenges around balancing the allocation of MPI resources and establishing exit strategies. One strategy they have used is to help the groups engage strategic partners, so the groups can continue to obtain the expertise needed and to make progress and thrive, even after MPI staff withdraw.

One of the things that we have been very cognisant of is that we can't do this on our own. And so throughout all the prototypes we always engaged, (whether it is with one strategic partner or a number of strategic partners). Because our resource is finite – whether it is our people or investments in some cases – and we won't be here forever. But these projects... when they are successful they will [continue on]. And so the key thing for us is to get in there, drive, all hands in, and... inject the strategic partners, so that when we exit, these guys can continue on. [MPI staff]

Question 4: Learnings for a business-as-usual programme

Overview

114. The evaluators found that MPI staff operated in a highly effective manner to support the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects. MPI staff demonstrated a range of relationship building skills that are vital for working in partnership and collaboration.
115. The evaluators believe that a key learning from this project is that the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour of the MPI staff played a vital role in supporting high trust-based and purposeful relationships to be built with Māori land owners and other partners in the prototype projects, and that these relationships predicated the success of the projects.
116. Therefore, this section teases out the approaches taken by MPI staff in more detail and in a more structured manner to help MPI adopt this relationship-based approach as part of its business as usual. The evaluators found evidence that MPI staff:
- worked with Māori land owners to engage and establish relationships with each other and with other stakeholders
 - played a facilitator role with Māori land owners, enabling them to listen, express views and be heard during engagements with each other and with other stakeholders
 - helped Māori land owners and stakeholders to develop an understanding of and to frame the issues to be addressed
 - supported Māori land owners and stakeholders to envision or conceptualise solutions

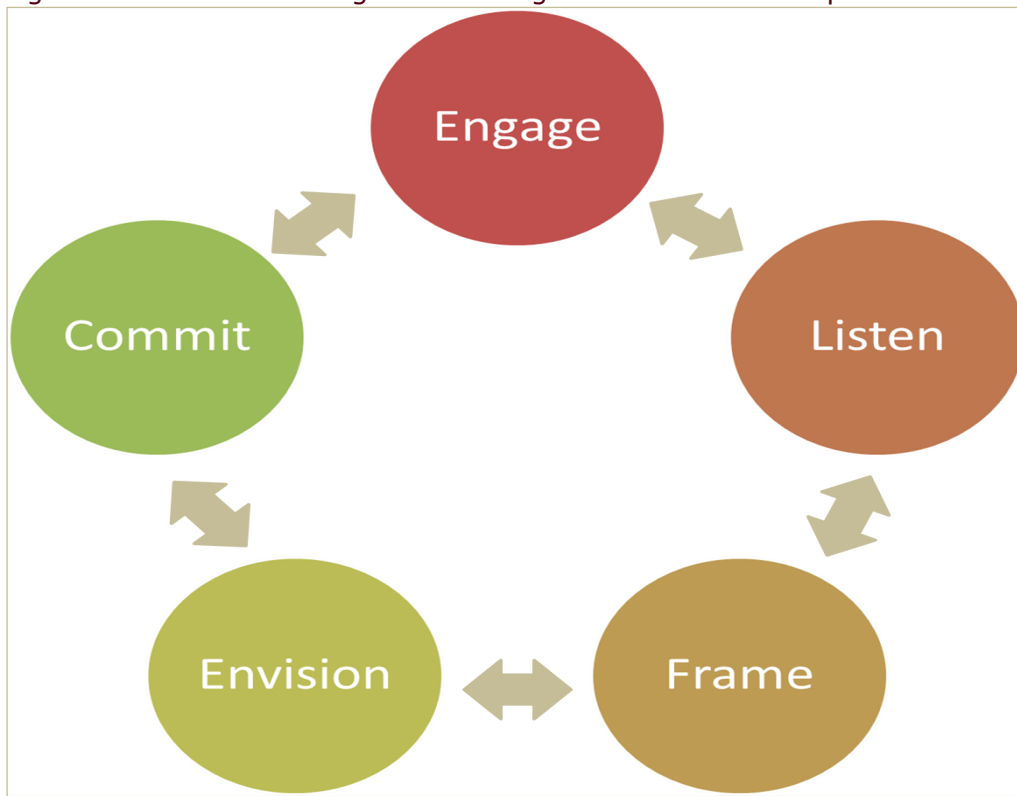
- supported Māori land owners and stakeholders to make commitments to chosen courses of action.
117. This is a highly relational approach, and it closely mirrors a model from management consulting literature called the “Trusted Relationship Model”.

Origins of the Trusted Relationship Model

118. This section introduces a model that is proving useful for describing the process of building trusted relationships that MPI staff used to support the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects. Through several evaluation projects, the Kinnect Group has looked to the literature for ways to capture and record the process of building trusted relationships and how this provides a foundation for working together to address challenges and opportunities.
119. We have found support for the importance of building strong relational trust in the literature from a range of sources. All contain examples of ideas that support building trusted relationships:
- the management consulting literature (Covey, Link, & Merrill, 2012; Maister, Green, & Galford, 2000; Katz & Kahn, R.L., 1978)
 - literature from the Government sector (Department of Human Services, 2011, p. 19)
 - the international development literature (Baser & Morgan, 2008)
 - the evaluation literature (Patton M. Q., 2008, Patton M. Q., 2011)
 - the indigenous literature (Cram, 2009; Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Smith, 1999) – which has always maintained the importance of building relationships.
120. The trusted relationship model also draws on the evaluators’ practical experience including:
- the *Evaluation of the Māori Oral Health Providers Project* (Wehipeihana, N., Oakden, J., Spee, K., Cram, F., Pipi, K., and Porima, L., 2011)
 - the *Evaluation of the Vulnerable Pregnant Women's Multidisciplinary Team, Hawke's Bay District Health Board*, (Cram, F. & Ormond, A. 2011)
 - current work the Kinnect Group is undertaking in the local government sector.
121. For this evaluation, the evaluators adapted a model from *The trusted advisor* (Maister, Green, & Galford, 2000) which identifies five distinct stages in the development of trusted relationships. These stages are: engaging, listening, framing, envisioning and committing. Maister et al’s original diagram (Maister, Green, & Galford, 2000, p. 85) was modified to

take into account two further factors: the iterative nature of building relational trust and the ongoing and cyclical nature of engagement.

Figure 4: Model of the stages of building a trusted relationship



The model in action

122. The following table presents evidence that illustrates how MPI staff adopted a partnership-focussed, relationship-based approach to work with Māori land owners and with key stakeholders at each stage to build trusted relationships. This included attitudes, beliefs and behaviours.

Table 5: Stages of building trusted relationships, with examples of how MPI staff supported this

Stage	How MPI staff supported building trusted relationships
Engage and establish relationships	<p>MPI staff recognised the importance of appropriate engagement and sound relationship-building and appreciated the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • importance of historical context • importance of mandate (agreement of Māori land owners to proceed) • need for effective project leaders and that different types of leaders are needed for different projects and contexts • need to get the right people at the discussion table • need to allow sufficient time to get to know one another – especially at the beginning of the project • need to build on existing relationships where possible, to enhance credibility • signaling of readiness to move forward is an assessment best made by leaders • need to offer genuine choice and support Māori land owners to select the experts they wished to work with • appropriateness of using tikanga Māori approaches where possible.
Listen, express views and be heard	<p>MPI staff recognised the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure Māori land owners and other key stakeholders had a chance to express their aspirations and be heard • ensure Māori land owners had a chance to meet with other Māori land owners and discuss others’ aspirations • work will all involved towards agreement on the possibilities to be explored.
Develop an understanding of the issues; frame the issue	<p>MPI staff appreciated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • issues may be complex and there may be a number of different aspects and perspectives to be considered when making business decisions – including not only economic values but also social, environmental and cultural values • issues may be considered from a very long-term, intergenerational view • expert input may be required, and the selection of experts needed to be made by Māori land owners (with some limited, judicious and impartial support from MPI, if specifically requested) • there is a need for a clear understanding of the options, which are framed in ways that are understandable, before people can move forward • everyone may not immediately understand the potential and some may need to see different options in practice before they can envision potential for their own situation.
Envision or conceptualise solutions	<p>MPI staff recognised that there may be a range of possible solutions so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Māori land owners needed to be able to consider the options carefully, to their own time-frames and from their own value base or world view – including social, environmental and cultural values as well as economic values • a long-term view might predicate a different approach than might be considered desirable over a shorter timeframe.
Make commitments	<p>MPI staff recognised that different people had different approaches to making a commitment and that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Māori land owners needed to make the decisions for themselves with support – but not undue influence – from MPI • there needed to be genuine solutions available within current legal and financial frameworks before commitments could be made • as many as possible of the Māori land owners who show up or engage needed to fully understand the possible solutions, and at times this required several meetings • commitments might be intergenerational and therefore set-up at times required a wider range of aspects to be considered • the commitments made were likely to be robust due to this process.

123. While this evaluation solely focussed on the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects, there is some evidence MPI staff applied a similar approach to Māori land owners as they did to other partners on the prototypes including: representatives from Landcorp Farming, banks, lawyers and industry consultants. MPI staff contend that the partnership-focussed, relationship-based approach could also be applied by others in MPI and the wider public service to build trusted relationships more generally. While we concur, however, this assertion was untested in the evaluation.
124. The rest of this section provides further detail on the kinds of processes that evolved during the project. It shows how these processes supported Māori land owners to pool their resources and come to agreements as to how they would farm at an economic scale and to make commitments to build capability to grow productivity.

Engaging and establishing relationships

125. MPI leadership and staff understood the importance of appropriate forms of engagement with Māori land owners from the outset of the project. The MPSP team built on pre-existing relationships where possible to enhance their credibility. Also, senior staff from MPI went out to each group to meet leaders associated with each group (ie rangitira ki te rangitira). Head office staff who might engage at a governance level, and regional staff who might engage at an operational level with the groups were also present.
126. Once the groups indicated they were interested in engaging with MPI staff, sufficient time was allowed for a mandate to be reached between Māori land owners before the project proceeded. MPI staff appreciated that history, context, and relationships needed to be navigated to reach this mandate. MPI staff were adept in identifying the different types of leaders that might support the project, and providing help where requested. During this period regional staff were able to check in regularly, both on a formal and informal basis to support the group or leaders of the group as and where needed.
127. At the point that leaders signalled their people were ready to move forward MPI staff supported them to determine what the issues they wanted to address, and what expert assistance they might require.

Listening, expressing views and being heard

128. A series of meetings were held, and one of the learnings from MPI staff was the importance of ensuring that Māori land owners had a chance to express their aspirations and be heard as well as listen to the aspirations of others before starting to plan for possibilities. Once there was agreement amongst the group as to the possibilities that might be explored, then MPI staff provided support in a number of ways:
- MPI staff were particularly effective in providing Māori land owners the chance to see potential business opportunities for their land.

- MPI staff identified examples that were aligned with the group's long-term aspirations and those of their whānau – not only from an economic perspective, but also from social, cultural and environmental perspectives.
129. Group participants welcomed MPI staff setting up opportunities for them to visit successful businesses on which they could potentially model their own businesses. These included both Māori businesses, which offered models of governance and ways of doing the business, and non-Māori businesses, which were innovative in their field. MPI staff believed that actually seeing the potential in other businesses was a useful way to support Māori land owners to vision new futures for themselves.

Developing an understanding of the issues, framing the issues

130. MPI staff appreciated that it was complex to find workable solutions for situations where multiple owners with small shareholdings wanted to pool their resources to farm at an economic scale and build capability to grow productivity. Thus MPI staff respected and took account of the number of different aspects and perspectives Māori land owners would consider when making business decisions, including the social, environmental and cultural values as well as economic values.
131. An important means of ensuring momentum was maintained was effective leadership within the groups. The group leaders appreciated support from MPI staff. Where MPI staff provided advice and support, they were careful to ensure the leaders led discussions and navigated the range of issues to be considered with their groups.
132. The form of support provided could be a function of location – it was typically easier for MPI staff located in the regions to make regular and more informal contact. Often they already had strong relationships with Māori land owners as well. Another benefit of the support from MPI regional staff was it was more cost-effective and timely than someone from another region travelling. Informal visits by MPI regional staff could be as simple as a brief, informal cuppa in town to keep in touch.
133. MPI staff reflected that land-owning groups were likely to consider issues from a very long-term intergenerational view, and experts who worked with the groups needed to understand these broader perspectives at play. MPI staff offered a range of experts for the groups to choose between, recognising that it was important the group to select their own expert advisors (with support at times from MPI but only where this was invited).
134. MPI staff appreciated there was a need for a specialist advisor to build an effective rapport with a group. It was noted that likeability was as important as people having sufficient expertise and ability to communicate complex findings effectively. In one instance where MPI staff did not provide options, the group requested a genuine choice. In another instance where the expert did not turn out to be a good fit with the group, an alternative expert was sought.

135. Participants appreciated the way they were able to get to a point where they had a clear understanding of their options, which were framed in ways that were understandable and relevant to them. However, MPI staff observed that sometimes not all members of a group would immediately understand the potential, and it was useful for some of the group members to see different options in practice. This helped the groups envision potential for their own circumstances.
136. MPI staff reflected that when groups saw the potential it really helped them move forward. One participant described their group as being “unsettled” before they found a suitable possible solution. There were a number of examples where groups had tried to move forward in the past but lacked a clear understanding of what would be the best option and momentum had stalled.

*Without the professional advice we could have continued to be more unsettled. We are currently working through matters but are more technically equipped with sound base information, tailored specifically toward our needs and situation. This has been the key learning: what we are able to get out of this is professional advice to influence or aide decision making, to justify the rigour of decisions.
[Participant]*

Envisioning or conceptualising solutions

137. MPI staff reflected that buy-in was best when Māori land owners had the opportunity to consider the options carefully, working to their own time-frames and from their own value bases – including social, environmental and cultural values as well as economic values. MPI staff understood the importance of mandate – that group leaders needed to bring everyone along together and this might take time and several meetings. At times, this required multiple visits from experts and MPI staff, and these additional visits needed to be allowed for in contracting budgets and planning workloads.
138. A long-term view dictated a different approach and solution than might be considered desirable for a shorter time-frame. For instance, one of the projects set up a memorandum of understanding between two Iwi that is intended to be in place for several generations. Thus the terms of reference were more about how they might work together long-term, than focussing on short-term business goals.
139. MPI staff were very clear that their role during this stage was to facilitate and not to direct Māori land owners – who needed to own their own decisions, given it was their livelihood at stake.
140. Māori land owners appreciated the MPI support to help implement progress towards their goals and hope other Māori entities would get the same opportunity for support.

MPI have played a very important role and have done so from an enabler approach versus a 'do what we tell you/we know best' approach. [Participant]

I believe the model, that is, bespoke consultancy advice in a structured system has significant opportunity to lift productivity and profitability. The gains are such that the system should be scalable and transferable to other land users. [Participant]

Making commitments

141. One of the strongly positive results of the Māori Agribusiness Prototype projects was that, within a relatively short period, a number of significant commitments were made by the groups taking part in the projects. As mentioned earlier in the report for example:
- a group comprising two Iwi reached a memorandum of understanding to work together with an outside organisation in a farming venture. The outside organisation will manage the operation of the business until the Iwi have built sufficient capacity to take over the day-to-day operation themselves
 - a group of multiple owners developed a mandated governance entity to consolidate land and convert to a more profitable form of farming
 - a group decided to lease the rights to a business opportunity to a third party, and managed to negotiate an optimal solution for all. This was particularly testing, as individuals were offered deals by individual companies but elected to work together within a wider group
 - other groups felt they had sufficiently detailed information to start working on the directions they might take.
142. The fact that these significant steps were taken in a relatively short time-frame reinforces the view of MPI staff that Māori land owners needed to and were capable of making the decisions for themselves. The role of MPI therefore is to bring knowledge, information and networks to assist land owners to consider options and make good decisions. Of course, there need to be genuine solutions within the current legal and financial frameworks in order for commitments to be reached. Legal and financial systems are often challenging for groups of multiple owners with small shareholdings who wish to pool their resources to farm at an economic scale. Māori land owners appreciated expert advice to successfully navigate these systems.
143. Because the issues were complex, multiple meetings may be needed to ensure all land owners have sufficient information and understanding to make decisions and commit to action. As some commitments were intergenerational there was a need to allow for set-up, which at times required a wider range of aspects to be considered. However, when Māori land owners had the opportunity to cover off and address the key issues, they were able to commit to a course of action.

[We now have a] long-term farming strategy. [We know and understand] the role that [external organisation] will play in this joint venture. [We know the] structure of the Iwi joint venture. [We have developed] key performance indicators to

support strategy. [We have a plan for] profitable land acquisition. [Two areas that are still work in progress include] profitable existing land use development [and] commercial production expansion options in Year 1. [Participant]

[We are] utilising our land to the best of its potential; we will be meeting our own expectations as well as the public's expectations and the beneficiaries of [Trust] Lands. That is: Economic = Job creation; Social = Papakainga; Cultural = Cultural knowledge; Environmental = protecting our natural environment. [Participant]

144. Further, MPI staff observed the commitments made by the groups tended to be robust due to this process and participants noted that once commitments were secured, groups were able to move at speed, as indicated in this final quote.

Our current relationship with the MPI team is very strong, and has got stronger as we forge ahead. We have built up a robust trust with each other. The MPI team are very professional in every aspect, and I cannot fault them. [Participant]

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