Biosecurity New Zealand
Tiakitanga Pūtaiao Aotearoa


# MPI 18607 Project Report

## Building engagement and social licence: Unpacking Social Licence to Operate and partnerships – developing rubrics for guidance and assessment.

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# Executive summary

## Introduction

In 2017 the Ministry for Primary Industries' (MPI) commissioned research into myrtle rust (*Austropuccinia psidii*) to address critical knowledge gaps in social, cultural and scientific knowledge relating to the management of myrtle rust in NZ, as identified by the Strategic Science Advisory Group (SSAG). 'Building engagement and social licence' was identified as one of the priority research areas. The intended outcome of this research is to improve understanding of the impacts of myrtle rust social licence and engagement activities to help guide agencies and other decision makers involved in incursion response and long-term management of myrtle rust.

Efforts to develop and maintain both Social Licence to Operate (SLO) and engagement are often hampered by a lack of clarity around the different components that underpin these concepts, and a lack of tools to guide and evaluate progress in these areas. SLO is most often described in the literature as intangible and impermanent, subject to continual review and renewal by the different stakeholders involved. These very hard to define qualities also perpetuate the difficulty that agencies have in defining the concept and their efforts to develop and maintain it. Similar problems face the role of those charged with planning and evaluating engagement in a more collaborative biosecurity system.

This report describes and develops rubrics as a tool for planning and assessing initiatives in SLO and engagement associated with systems change. Biosecurity 2025 emphasises the need for a 'partnership' between people, organisations, Māori, and central, local and regional government (Biosecurity New Zealand n.d.). We have focussed specifically on partnerships as a particular form of engagement involving two-way communication and shared responsibility. Our development of rubrics builds on both the experience of the research team and a review of international and national literature for strengthening activities that support engagement and SLO. This work also builds on, and links with, findings from the other research initiatives in this theme which look specifically at the New Zealand Myrtle Rust incursion response experience.

## Rubrics as methodology

Rubrics are introduced as a way of defining and describing components of what are complex tasks and behaviours involving risk and uncertainty. Rubrics are useful tools offering: i) a methodological framework to clarify the core elements (tasks and behaviours) that enable successful partnerships and social licence; and, ii) support for decision makers and on the ground operatives to improve their approach to these initiatives in practice. Rubrics are both an instructional tool and a performance assessment tool. They are used as a guide to help practitioners understand the objectives for their learning and the qualities required for achieving high standards in an assigned task. They also help people make dependable judgments about their practices that can inform their own revision and improvement. Accordingly, the generation of a rubric is as important as its later use in assessment. The act of developing a rubric can help create clarity and insight that is shared across a range of people involved in a joint activity such as a project or a response operation.

Rubrics for SLO and cross-sector partnerships are presented in this report. Each rubric sets out criteria and provides guidance on how tasks or behaviours could be undertaken to ensure good practice. The rubrics presented are intended as templates to support a facilitated process of rubric development and use within a broader participatory and collaborative biosecurity approach. These rubrics should be introduced to teams with the guidance of those skilled in process facilitation to help teams:

- refine them for their own individual context; and
- utilise them to guide planning, implementation and evaluation.

## Social licence to operate

SLO is recognised as the level of acceptance or approval by local communities and stakeholders of organisations/agencies and their operations. It does not refer to a formal agreement or document but to the real or current credibility, reliability, and acceptance of organisations, tools and operations. The results of the literature review and rubric development highlighted six key areas where agencies could

target their efforts to maintain or develop social licence. These are: i) creating awareness and shared purpose; ii) communications and engagement; iii) relationship-building; iv) managing SLOs across scales; v) responding to community concerns; vi) managing procedural and distributional fairness; and vii) monitoring and evaluating progress on these efforts.

## Cross-sector collaboration and partnerships

Cross-sector collaboration and partnerships are recognised as a well-established approach to engagement with an important role in managing many natural resource management situations. The concept of partnership is recognised as key to New Zealand's Biosecurity 2025 strategy. Cross-sector partnerships typically refer to relatively intensive, long-term interactions between partners at a range of levels, aimed at addressing a social and/or environmental problem that cannot be addressed by any one of the partners working alone. The results of the literature review and rubric development highlighted five key areas where agencies could target their efforts to maintain or develop effective partnerships. These are: i) ensuring common and agreed aims and goals; ii) communications and engagement; iii) managing relationships; iv) coordinating joint activities and contributions; and v) monitoring and evaluating progress on these efforts.

## In the long term – strategic learning and adaptive management

The closing sections of this report provide guidance on how teams can best reflect on their performance and use rubrics to assess progress and gain insights. In a strategic learning debrief, participants review: i) what was intended (activity aims); ii) what 'actually' happened (intended and unintended outcomes); iii) why these things happened and what was learned. This goes beyond monitoring and evaluation processes that end with a project or activity to help begin the next cycle of planning. Strategic learning ensures lessons from rubrics and other data sources will be timely, actionable and forward-looking. It helps programme managers and staff to assess progress and adapt their practice in a way that increases the likelihood of success.

## Implications and recommendations

The rubrics provided here provide a mechanism to help MPI and other agency biosecurity teams to develop clarity around the different components that underpin SLO and engagement, and as a tool to guide and evaluate progress in these areas. Rubrics are of most benefit if they are recognised as both a process and a product. Their development and use ideally involves the key personnel involved (practitioners and stakeholders) in a facilitated analysis and reflection about the system in question. This joint discussion results in documented narratives and/or diagrams that outline the key elements, providing guidance for practice and assessment of the project team and their stakeholders. It is recommended that MPI and other biosecurity agencies:

In the short-term:

- Introduce the SLO rubric (with facilitation support) to identify pilot areas where teams and programmes can actively explore how to improve the planning and assessment of operational SLO activities,
- Introduce the Partnership rubric (with facilitation support) to identify pilot areas where teams and programmes want to actively explore how to improve the planning and assessment of operational partnership activities,
- Utilise the rubrics approach to develop a shared understanding of multi-partner situations across a range of performance areas relating to the response operations. This is particularly useful in areas (e.g. welfare) where different partners and stakeholders hold diverse views of what this means in practice.

In the medium term:

- Work with these initial SLO and partnerships rubrics (or some similar tools) to introduce key staff to their development and use in practice, and to ensure that all partnerships and SLO initiatives are planned and their performance assessed with the benefit of guidance that these tools provide.

# Contents

# 1 Project background

To better understand myrtle rust and limit its impact in New Zealand, the Ministry for Primary Industries commissioned a comprehensive research programme in 2017 with more than 20 projects valued at over $3.7 million. Projects in this programme were completed by June 2019.

The projects covered research in the following themes:

- Theme 1 - Understanding the pathogen, hosts, and environmental influence.
- Theme 2 – Building engagement and social licence: Improved understanding of public perceptions and behaviours to allow better decisions about investment, improved design of pathway control strategies and maintain social license for use of management tools.
- Theme 3 – Te Ao Māori: Greater understanding of Te Ao Māori implications of myrtle rust in order to support more effective investments, and improved use of Mātauranga, specific Māori knowledge, and kaupapa Māori approaches in management regimes.
- Theme 4 – Improving management tools and approaches: Improved diagnostic and surveillance speed, accuracy and cost-effectiveness, supporting eradication efforts and enabling scaling up of surveillance efforts for a given resource. More effective treatment toolkits to avoid emergences of MR resistance to treatments and to enable disease control over increasingly large scales that will lead to reduced or avoided impacts.
- Theme 5 - Evaluating impacts and responses: Improved understanding of environmental, economic, social and cultural, impacts to inform risk assessment and management and to communicate implications to decision/makers and stakeholders.

This report is part of the MPI commissioned research under contract MPI18607 which addressed research questions within Theme 2, 4 and 5.

Text in the report may refer to other research programmes carried out under the respective theme titles.

# 2 Introduction

In 2017 the Ministry for Primary Industries' (MPI) commissioned research into myrtle rust (*Austropuccinia psidii*) to address critical knowledge gaps in social, cultural and scientific knowledge relating to the management of myrtle rust in NZ, as identified by the Strategic Science Advisory Group (SSAG). 'Building engagement and social licence' was identified as one of the priority research areas[1]. The intended outcome of this research is to improve understanding of the impacts of myrtle rust social licence to operate (SLO) and related engagement activities to help guide agencies and other decision makers involved in incursion response and long-term management of myrtle rust.

This report provides an initial rubric as a tool for planning and assessing initiatives in each of the SLO and engagement areas. These tools need to be seen as both process and product. In this way the rubrics provide a mechanism for the research knowledge to be both shared (throughout MPI and other agencies) and incorporated into operational practice. As Biosecurity 2025 emphasises the need for a 'partnership' between people, organisations, Māori, and central, local and regional government (Biosecurity New Zealand n.d.) we have focussed specifically on partnerships as a particular form of engagement involving two-way communication and shared responsibility. The report introduces 'rubrics' as a way of defining and describing the important components of what are quite complex tasks and behaviours. They are used in two ways i) as a framework to clarify the core elements (tasks and behaviours) that enable successful partnerships and social licence and, ii) as an assessment tool for decision makers and on the ground operatives to review performance and guide implementation of initiatives to support partnerships and social licence in practice.

The development of the rubrics builds on both the experience of the research team and a review of international and national literature around strengthening activities that support engagement and SLO, particularly focusing on experience in the natural resource management area. This work also incorporates and links with the other research initiatives in this theme. These other initiatives are: i) a case study involving interviews and focus groups with impacted individuals in Taranaki (Stronge et al. 2019); ii) a wider internet survey targeting the listings of restricted property (RP) notices and call centre respondents (Bayne et al. 2019), and iii) interviews with motivated individuals looking to increase their involvement in biosecurity activities (Grant et al 2019).

1 The other three priority areas where: i) Te Ao Māori; ii) Improving management tools and approaches; and iii) Evaluating impacts and responses.

# 3 Research context

SLO and engagement are recognised as being important areas of agency operational management for biosecurity, and more generally in natural resource management, in New Zealand (e.g. Edwards & Trafford 2016, Allen et al. 2018). The two concepts are linked, with engagement (particularly partnerships) being recognised as a key underpinning component of SLO (Dare et al. 2014, Edwards & Trafford 2016). In this section we briefly define both areas in terms of their importance to biosecurity, and then outline the challenges in developing applied tools to support improved understanding and help agencies successfully translate and embed that into operational practice.

### 3.1.1 Social licence to operate

Successful biosecurity and plant disease management is inherently a collective endeavour (Hellstrom et al. 2008, MPI 2016). Policymakers and agencies cannot address New Zealand's biosecurity challenges without significant good will and collective action from land managers and a whole range of publics. This, in turn, is determinant on the presence of SLO.

SLO refers to the level of acceptance or approval by local communities and stakeholders of organisations/ agencies and their operations. The concept has evolved from the broader and more established notions of "corporate social responsibility" and "social acceptability". It is based on the idea that institutions and companies need not only regulatory permission but also "social permission" to conduct their business. SLO does not refer to a formal agreement or document but to the real or current credibility, reliability, and acceptance of organisations, tools and operations.

The concept is recognised as important to New Zealand's Biosecurity 2025 strategy (MPI 2016). In a biosecurity context, obtaining and maintaining a social licence requires governance models in which priority values are negotiated, rather than mandated, and that they embrace different levels of social licence through formal (e.g. Treaty of Waitangi, GIA partnerships) and informal processes (Ruckstuhl et al. 2014, Edwards et al. 2018). As Garnett and colleagues (2017) point out, however vague the concept may be, social licence can be considered a precursor and necessary condition to existing and ongoing legal licences – and although the consequences of losing social licence may be ill-defined, the consequences of failure can be expensive.

### 3.1.2 Cross-sector partnerships

Good biosecurity management relies on a range of activities that happen at different scales (Allen & Horn 2009). Strategies and policies are the work of national and regional levels, while operational activity is often taken at regional, or more localised, levels. At the operational level, processes need to be inclusive and usually involve a range of end-users in partnership-based activities. Often managers working at these operational levels do not have the skills and tools to introduce practical approaches that help them to break down silos, and to work across iwi, sector groups, agencies and organisations.

Cross-sector collaboration and partnerships represent a well-established way of managing many natural resource management situations (Gray & Stites 2013), and the concept of partnership is recognised as key to New Zealand's Biosecurity 2025 strategy (MPI 2016). Cross-sector partnerships typically refer to relatively intensive, long-term interactions between actors from at least two sectors (business, government, and/or civil society) aimed at addressing a social and/or environmental problem that cannot be addressed by any one of the partners working alone (Austin 2000, Bryson et al. 2015, Klitsie et al. 2018, Clarke & Crane 2018).

In recent years researchers have continued to highlight not only the benefits that are emerging from cross-sector partnership such as shared problem ownership, joint contribution of resources and greater sense of achievement from working together (Bryson et al. 2015, Hartman & Dhanda 2018), but also recognise that there are cases of failure and uneven results (Das & Teng 2000, Andrews & Entwistle 2010, Gray & Stites 2013). Partnerships can bring many advantages, but require time and effort, reduce individual partner autonomy, and can result in more complexity and opportunistic behaviour because of information and power inequity and imbalances (Piltan & Sowlati 2016). Given that cross-sector partnerships are recognised as underpinning successful biosecurity initiatives we need to be concerned about whether they are meeting their aims. Such partnerships have implicit objectives relating to partnership formation, dynamics, relationships

among partner members, and collective action aims that are integral to the effectiveness of attaining their outcomes (Israel et al. 1995, Schulz et al. 2003).

### 3.1.3 Applied operational challenges

Moreover, efforts to develop and maintain both SLO and engagement (particularly partnerships) are often hampered by a lack of clarity around the different components that underpin these concepts, and a lack of tools to guide and evaluate progress in these areas. SLO is most often described in the literature as intangible and impermanent, subject to continual review and renewal by the different stakeholders involved (Parsons and Moffat 2014). However, these very hard to define qualities also perpetuate the difficulty that agencies have in defining the concept and their efforts to develop and maintain it. Similar problems face the role of those charged with planning and evaluating a range of cross-sector partnerships in a more collaborative biosecurity system. The lack of adequate planning and evaluation tools for assessing the performance of partnerships, particularly in their maintenance or implementation phase, has been identified as one of the main reasons for partnership failure (Piltan & Sowlati 2016).

Managers operating in these areas are addressing the need to improve tasks and behaviours characterised by complexity, uncertainty, interdependence and multiple social perspectives (Cvitanovic et al. 2016). Tools that facilitate integrated knowledge, information transfer and collaboration among multiple actors are therefore required to support managers, at different levels, with decision-making in these areas. An effective guide to performance management can help by providing timely information to improve ongoing initiatives as they are being implemented, and to review and document their progress. In turn, addressing process issues such as managing SLO and engagement in biosecurity will always need to find a starting point appropriate to the current state. The next section looks at rubrics as a performance assessment methodology that helps to develop the process. Rubrics help those involved to both systematically identify the key underlying criteria for the system under investigation and provide a mechanism for assessing performance in these complex social endeavours.

# 4 Rubrics – a tool for guiding and assessing performance

Rubrics are a both an instructional tool and a performance assessment tool. Developing rubrics involves articulating and clarifying 'the things that matter' in a complex task or behaviour, which can encompass aspects related to the performance, quality, usefulness, and effectiveness of the initiative's activities, services or products. These aspects are the things that are considered by those involved in the project as important to pay attention to. These things can, in turn, be assessed using a rating nomenclature (e.g. excellent, good, adequate, poor).

Rubrics are most commonly used in education, and increasingly they are being used to help develop instruction and evaluation/assessments in sectors such as community development and natural resource management and in addressing other complex problems. Their use in biosecurity is just starting to be explored to address challenges in guiding and evaluating complex tasks and behaviours (e.g. Allen et al. 2018). Although the format of a rubric can vary, they all have two key components (Andrade 2000):

- A list of criteria—or key elements that count in an activity or task; and
- Gradations of quality—to provide an evaluative range or scale.

Developing rubrics requires defining the task or behaviour to be assesses and involves two main steps:

Defining criteria to be assessed. These should represent the component elements that are required for successful achievement of the task to be rated. This can include consideration of outputs (things completed) and processes (level of participation, required behaviours, etc.). The different parts of the task need to be set out simply and completely. This can often be started by asking participants to brainstorm what they might expect to see where/when the task is done very well … and very poorly.

Developing scales which describe how well any given task or process has been performed. These scales can use different language such as:

- Advanced, intermediate, fair, poor
- Exemplary, proficient, marginal, unacceptable

Co-developing rubrics helps clarify the expectations that people have for different aspects of performance by providing detailed descriptions of collectively agreed-upon measures. They not only formulate standards for key areas of accomplishment, but they can be used to make these areas clear and explicit to all those with an interest in improving performance (Allen et al. 2018). It is important to involve key stakeholders in developing the final versions of rubrics that may be used to assess their activities. By involving stakeholders in helping define and agree on the criteria and assessment scales – as something they feel is achievable and within the limits of normal operations – the assessment is more likely to be used and acted upon by those involved. Moreover, by involving a range of stakeholders, there is a greater likelihood that a more complete picture of operations will be developed as different people within the system can offer different perspectives of what they contribute to the overall initiative. This broad involvement increases the likelihood that evaluation efforts can provide a more complete picture of performance incorporating quality as well as quantity aspects.

Rubrics are often used just to assess tasks and behaviours, but many authors remind us that they can serve an instructional role as well: Used as part of a practitioner-centred approach to planning, implementation and final assessment, rubrics have the potential to help learners understand the targets for their learning and the standards of quality for an assigned task, as well as make dependable judgments about their own work that can inform revision and improvement (Reddy and Andrade 2010).

The rubric outlines the performance standards a practitioner or team must meet to feel confident they are performing well for each component of the broader task or activity. The approach used here is termed a single-point rubric (Fluckiger 2010, Cult of Pedagogy 2014), and it has been chosen because it provides constructive help in the following ways:

- It doesn't place boundaries on performance. The single-point rubric doesn't try to cover all the aspects of an activity that could go well or poorly. It gives guidance and then allows the actors involved to approach their task or behaviours in creative and unique ways.
- It means that each team or individual receives lessons that are tailored for them and their situation.
- It has fewer words than other rubric styles, meaning that actors are more likely to read it.

All these points align closely with the adaptive and learning-based behaviours that are needed to help deal with complex adaptive settings, such as those where agencies need to consider the importance of cross-sector partnerships and SLO.

Rubrics are of most benefit if they are recognised as both a process and a product (Allen et al. 2018). Their development ideally involves practitioners and stakeholders in a facilitated dialogic process of analysis and reflection about the system in question. This results in a new collective understanding (process) as well as a table format that articulates the key elements and their assessments for the project team and stakeholders. It is different from a simple checklist since it also describes the gradations of quality (threshold levels) for each dimension of the performance to be evaluated. Developing a rubric should not be a one-off exercise used in the design (or evaluation) phase of a biosecurity initiative, but an ongoing process of learning and adaptive management that continues throughout the life of the initiative (Ison and Russell 2011; Cook et al. 2010). Facilitated learning debriefs are one tool for reflection that can be used as a basis for supporting this adaptive management approach. In this manner, the rubric development and evaluation process itself can contribute towards fulfilling the desired partnership and SLO outcomes in a way that grows and strengthens over time.

The next sections of this report provide some background to each of the two topic areas in turn: i) Social Licence to Operate (SLO); and ii) Partnerships. Initial rubrics are provided for both the SLO and partnerships areas, and these can be used as they are – or modified and adjusted to meet the specific needs of different settings. A final section provides some commentary about how these can be used in practice to support a strategic learning and adaptive management approach to their use in practice.

# 5 Social licence to Operate

Several sources of information have been combined to develop this SLO rubric, which includes supportive guidelines for achieving standards in performance. This rubric builds on a review of international literature and facilitated participation at our Theme "Building engagement and social licence" workshop (15 August 2018 - Auckland) to explore our initial SLO performance criteria. The Theme "Building engagement and social licence" social research team has contributed as an expert panel, and with the benefit of the findings gained from the Taranaki Case Study (Stronge et al. 2019) and Myrtle Rust survey (Bayne et al. 2019).

## 5.1 Key performance criteria

Social licence to operate is foremost about trust (Stronge et al. 2019). Stakeholder engagement activities build trust though both direct involvement in engagement, and because of the flow-on effects of this involvement to others not directly involved. Achieving trust not only involves the actual engagement and related activities but is also influenced by the legacy of past relationships and activities (Vanclay 2012, Dare et al. 2014). However, achieving social licence is a complex process and outcomes can be influenced by several different activities. Figure 1 outlines some of the key criteria involved as derived from the literature. While not every criterion will be relevant in every situation, each has an important role to play in the development and maintenance of SLO. The criteria are not mutually exclusive but provide areas of focus where performance can be improved; alternatives may be possible depending on the context. There are links between criteria and areas in which they overlap. The next paragraphs consider each criterion in more detail.

Strategic consideration of how to **create awareness and shared purpose** provides a robust starting point for thinking about how to build or maintain social licence to operate. Successful strategies will be grounded in early and careful characterization of the stakeholder landscape (Yates & Horvath 2013). Early involvement of stakeholders can also contribute to developing and understanding the concerns and barriers that may be perceived around participating in such mapping and analysis activities (Leventon et al. 2016). Tools such as Theory of Change and Logic models can help participants to develop a larger shared picture of the problem, and to identify their roles in contributing to solutions (Allen et al. 2017). Most key stakeholder groupings are heterogeneous, and have a range of interests, particularly in relation to environmental and natural resource issues (Kendal & Ford 2017), and a range of communication and engagement approaches will need to be planned. In these settings cross-sector partnerships[2] are gaining interest and demonstrating their relevance for improving SLO with communities (NZ Sustainable Business Council 2013, Warner & Sullivan 2017), but if they are to work then partners need to see how their work fits together. In New Zealand the concept of partnership is recognised as key to New Zealand's biosecurity management (MPI 2016). In practice SLO can also support the development of shared awareness and goals to help partners in negotiating and planning for acceptable outcomes (Hall et al. 2014, Mercer-Mapstone et al. 2017).

In such a diverse stakeholder landscape **communication and engagement** strategies provide mechanisms that can consider multiple social perspectives and provide for a range of one-way and two-way communication processes. Recent research highlights that agencies must step beyond a narrow technical operational focus that tends towards thinking of risk communication and engagement as one-way delivery of information to engage more meaningfully with partners and key stakeholders and enter into dialogue based on participation, trust and understanding (Kruger 2011; Allen et al. 2014, 2018; Moser 2014). A growing challenge for biosecurity management is to make more use of two-way risk communication and engagement strategies (Allen et al. 2018) which are regarded as important in gaining and maintaining SLO (Dare et al. 2014, Mercer-Mapstone et al. 2018a&b, Baines & Edwards 2018). Partnerships exemplify this as they typically view two-way engagement as a priority and seek to encourage the co-creation and co-development of activities (Allen et al. 2018). Such two-way interactions may also enable those involved to initiate a dialogue that allows them to better appreciate each other's values, meaning systems, aspirations and expectations (Oliver 2002). Accordingly, this report develops a further rubric to illustrate the development of rubrics in the communication and engagement space and uses cross-sector partnerships given their role at the engagement end of the spectrum.

[2] The rubric on cross-sector partnerships recognises that they are an important pre-requisite intermediate outcome that can contribute to successful SLO outcomes over the longer-term.

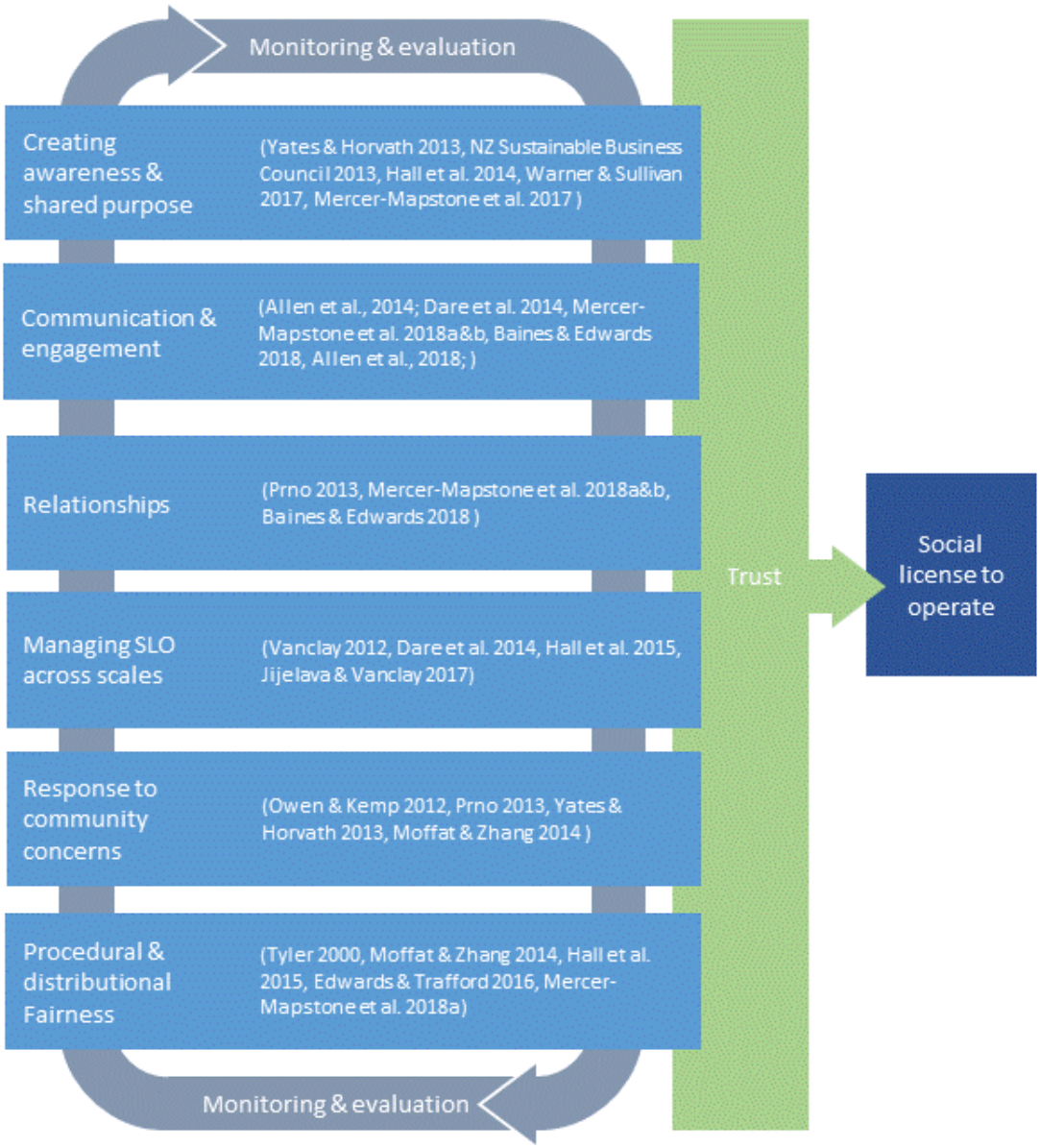


**Figure 1:** Key SLO criteria and referring literature

Collaborative **relationships** form the basis for being able to develop shared goals or address shared problems. Industry and academic reviewers place constructive relationships between industry, governments and their stakeholders at the heart of processes aiming to establish, or maintain, SLO (Prno 2013, Mercer-Mapstone et al. 2018b). Communication and engagement strategies are important mechanisms through which these relationships are built. Relationships resulting from two-way communication are of higher quality in relation to building (and maintaining) SLO (Mercer-Mapstone et al. 2018a&b). Similarly, relational quality is regarded as more important to SLO than transactional quality – i.e., the way the parties relate to each other by sharing information, acknowledging the value of each other, respecting other parties' values and following through on commitments[3] (Baines & Edwards 2018). In this regard transaction means the transfer of a contract or agreement (e.g., through the exchange of money for goods or services with not further commitments beyond what was agreed to). History counts in relationships, and SLO is more

[3] The importance of this was evident from the high praise expressed by numerous interviewees in the Taranaki myrtle rust case study (Stronge et al 2019) for agency individuals who listened to their concerns and made attempts to find solutions to them; even by those who were still angered by the response process and had very negative views about the agencies themselves.

likely to reward those who have positive, long-term relationships with their stakeholders (Prno 2013, Mercer-Mapstone et al. 2018a).

Another thing to consider with SLO is that it is very context specific. SLO may vary across different scales of activity and their settings. Thus, there is a need to **manage multiple SLOs across system scales or levels**. Communities are never homogenous and consequently multiple SLOs will always be required (Vanclay 2012, Jijelava & Vanclay 2017) to meet the range of needs and values held. These will always need to be managed at different scales from local (micro-scale) to society wide (Dare et al. 2014, Hall et al. 2015). Personal interactions can be as important as broader policy goals or strategic directions. SLO can simultaneously apply to tools/technologies and the operation in which they are used (Franks & Cohen 2012).

**Responding to community concerns** is another concept underpinning the building and maintenance of social licence. Understanding and appreciating different stakeholders' (and partners') values, meaning systems, aspirations and expectations is a first step in demonstrating that you have others' welfare in mind (Oliver 2002, Owen & Kemp 2013, Prno 2013). Addressing impacts (or equally, benefit sharing or providing infrastructure, capacity, etc.) is an important way for building relationships and trust with communities (Yates & Horvath 2013, Moffat & Zhang 2014). Agreements (about what will be done, and who will do it) provide a tangible basis for community engagement and benefit sharing with local communities. However, issues will often arise outside any agreement that cause angst, anger and concern to the parties involved. It is the organisation's response to these additional issues that can play an important role in determining whether their apparent 'social licence' is maintained (Owen & Kemp 2013).

How people engage is influenced by perceptions of what is just or fair (Tyler 2000, Mercer-Mapstone et al. 2018a). **Procedural and distributional fairness** are both significant criteria in community SLO decision-making. Procedural fairness refers to whether individuals and groups perceive that they have had a reasonable voice in a decision-making process (Moffat & Zhang 2014, Mercer-Mapstone et al. 2018a). As Tyler (2000) points out, an opportunity to have a voice in decision-making is a central factor that people consider in evaluating the fairness of social processes[4]. Distributional fairness refers to the ways in which communities think about whether they will benefit in some way from a given operation (albeit realise a public benefit), rather than having to pay the costs often externalised by certain operational activities (Hall et al. 2015, Edwards & Trafford 2016).

Ongoing **monitoring and evaluation** are important because as Brown and Fraser (2006) remind us, business must have regard for evolving social attitudes and expectations if it is to maintain its 'social licence'. Moreover, robust and transparent efforts in relation to monitoring and evaluation of the activities that underpin SLO demonstrate that an agency is serious about maintaining its relationships with specific communities or at multiple scales. Managing SLO requires an ongoing iterative approach of inquiry and reflection so it can accommodate different social paradigms as cultures and societies evolve (Nelsen 2006, Franks & Cohen 2012, Edwards & Lacey 2014). It needs to be contextualised within a framework – this rubric - that articulates the key elements that are important to gaining and holding an SLO (Hall et al. 2015, Boutilier 2017, Allen et al. 2017).

In these complex settings, context is key and not all the criteria will be important in all situations. For example, Stronge et al (2019) identified five areas (relationships, communications, competency, procedural fairness and response to community concerns) where more work could have usefully been done to improve consideration of SLO from stakeholders during the Taranaki myrtle rust incursion response. Similar case studies on the myrtle rust incursion response (or other response operations) in other regions of the country would likely highlight additional criteria that biosecurity agencies need to consider in their quest to acquire SLO for their activities – consequently, the rubric can be tailored to include those most relevant to any particular situation.

[4] This lack of voice, or inability to input into the process, was a significant issue for those interviewed for the Taranaki myrtle rust response case study (Stronge et al 2019).

## 5.2 SLO rubric – with performance standard guidelines

**Table 1:** SLO rubric – with performance standard guidelines

| Performance Criteria | 1 | 2 | 3 | Evidence of Performance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Creating awareness and shared purpose:** Stakeholder geography mapped. Strategic direction is jointly planned, theories of change are set out and agreed. Mutual benefit is identified in agreed outcomes and a shared agenda. Plans (#s) are well documented, and targets and milestones are met (%). Partnerships recognised as important. Partners prioritise joint work and their contribution to that. | | | | |
| **Communication and engagement:** Multiple communication channels and methods are in place. Plans recognise and support a continuum of two-way and one-way communication activities. Plans identify a rationale and guidance for appropriate activities at key points in the relationship (adjusted for different stakeholders/ audiences). | | | | |
| **Relationships:** Social and cultural links built with key stakeholders and others that can be "champions" back to their community during "peacetime". Staff turnover is low and seamless. Multiple institutional linkages are in place between partner agencies. | | | | |
| **Managing across different levels/scales:** Implementation is jointly planned, and synergies are identified. Partners integrate their delivery of joint work. The partnership has developed clear templates for processes and delegations. Project risk management processes are mapped and followed. Contribution and alignment extend into partner agencies and work programmes. Those involved have the skills and capacities to manage their tasks in a competent manner. Milestones met – in terms of quality and timeliness. | | | | |
| **Response to community concerns:** Providing good channels and forums to hear people talk about their concerns and issues. A commitment is maintained to resolve conflicts, and skills developed for conflict resolution. Organisational ability to change. Supporting communities to initiate engagement themselves. Provision of local benefits. | | | | |
| **Procedural and distributional fairness** Respect and consideration given to people – demonstrated through evidence of approaches to legitimacy, dialogue, equality, commitment, fairness, and integrity. | | | | |
| **Reflections on how it's all going:** Agency staff and teams regularly check in on each other and how they are going, both collectively and individually. A named person is responsible for team evaluation (preferably outside the response structure). Time is set aside for this, and there is a link between reflection and milestones. Reflection is open and 'formalised' as part of regular practice. Access to good data and information is critical. 'Lessons learned' are readily applied. | | | | |

*Assessment guide: 1 = Developing, 2 = Good, 3 = Excellent*

# 6 Cross-sector Partnerships

Several sources of information have been combined to develop this partnerships rubric, which includes performance standard guidelines. This rubric development builds on earlier work in the partnership and evaluation areas by members of the research team (e.g. Allen et al.2011 & 2018, Kilvington & Allen 2010, Albert et al. 2015), which includes workshops with different natural resource management sectors to identify key partnership themes. This Myrtle Rust study has contributed a further review of international literature and facilitated participants at an MPI biosecurity staff workshop (6 Dec 2019 - Wellington) to comment on partnership performance criteria and an indicative evidence base. The Theme "Building engagement and social licence" social research team has contributed as an expert panel, and with the benefit of the findings gained from the Taranaki Case Study (Stronge et al. 2019) and Motivated Individuals and Networks study (Grant et al. 2019).

## 6.1 Key performance criteria

Partnerships are widely researched, and there are several lists of underpinning elements that have been generated to outline partnership success factors. Moreover, because various literatures (public health, natural resource management, business, etc.) deal with partnership there is no single body of literature on the topic. Different sets of literature have roots in different disciplines and fields of practice, which influence their perspectives, the topics treated and their findings (Horton et al. 2009). In this report we have distilled some key performance criteria for cross-sector partnerships. Because of the diversity in partnerships in practice, one should not regard individual success factors to be applicable to every single instance in the same way. Figure 2 outlines some of the key criteria involved as derived from the literature. The next paragraphs consider each criterion more detail.

Successful partnerships are characterised by partners **having common and agreed aims**. A first important aspect in the formation of partnerships is agreeing its aim, and the scoping thereof to clarify this in the context of the different actor perspectives involved. Partnerships are best formulated on a topic that fits well with the core business and different value sets of the partners. Authors mention the need to invest enough time in defining goals, management processes and evaluative metrics (Shortell et al. 2002, Tholke 2003, van Huistee et al. 2007). These activities may also enable the partners to initiate a dialogue that allows them to better appreciate each other's values, meaning systems, aspirations and expectations (Oliver 2002, Selsky & Parker 2005, San Cristóbal Mateo 2017).

Cross-sector partnerships are more than just alliances. Co-operation at a range of scales to solve wicked problems is often the focus (Head & Alford 2015) – where multi-party collaboration across sectors and operational scales is often necessary (van Tulder et al. 2016, Klitsie et al. 2018). **Joint activities and contributions** to a common purpose are the norm. Resources and activities will often be pooled to solve the bigger problem collectively (Klitsie et al. 2018, Hartman & Dhanda 2018). Many reviewers point to successful partnerships as those that ensure that resources, responsibilities and benefits are equitably shared and through this trust is established and strengthened over time (Horton et al. 2009).

The importance of good **communication and engagement** is noted by several reviewers (Koschmann et al. 2012, Bryson et al. 2015, Hartman & Dhanda 2018). Good communication through openness, listening to each other and building a shared understanding are all essential (van Huistee et al. 2007). In this context communication can be seen as the "complex process of meaning negotiation and construction" (Koschmann et al. 2012). Much of this communication needs to be face-to-face and undertaken using both formal and informal settings (Allen et al. 2011, Bryson et al. 2015). Information sharing – the extent to which critical, often sensitive, information is shared in a timely fashion with partners is another good predicter of success (Mohr & Spekman 1994)

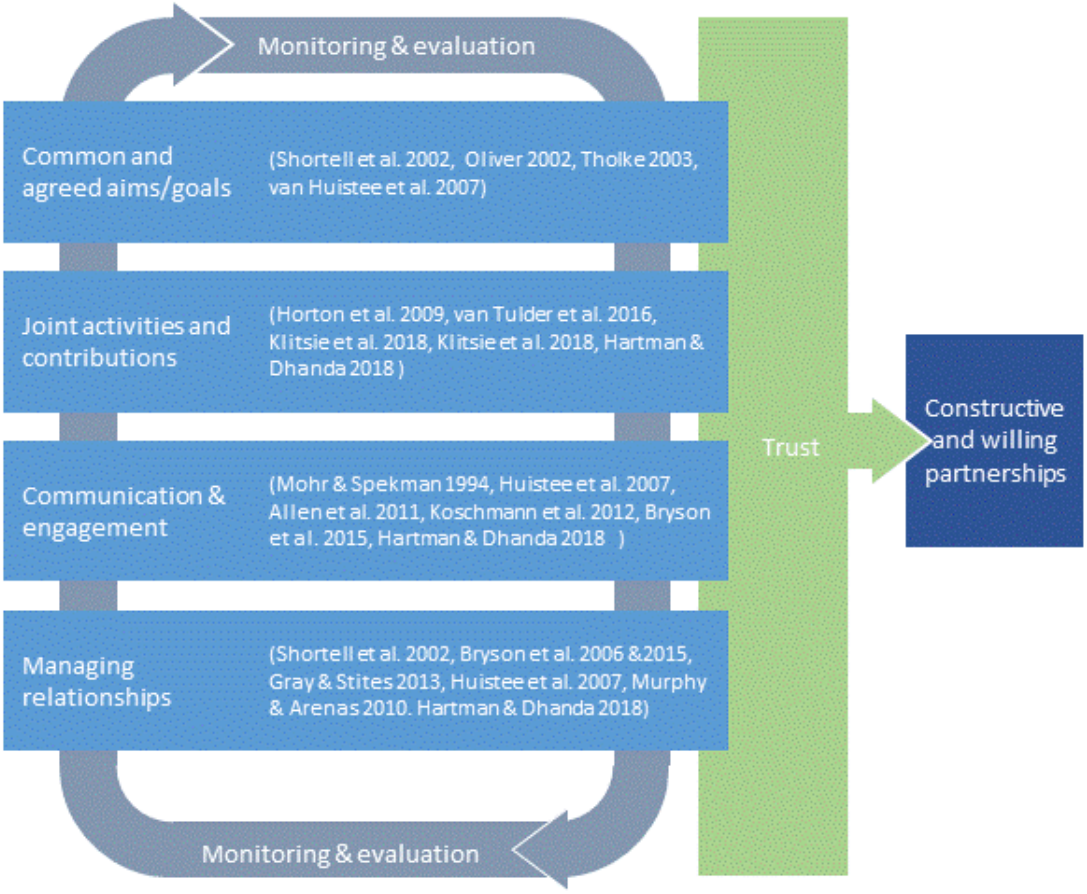


**Figure 2:** Key partnership performance criteria and referring literature

Trust is both the "lubricant and glue" of collaborations and the **relationships** that sustain and nurture them (Bryson et al. 2006). Trust is developed through ongoing interactions, and equally importantly tempered by past experiences. Key influences include personal and organizational dynamics, relationship history, power imbalances, leadership and conflict management (Sloan & Oliver 2013, Bryson et al. 2006, 2015). Both external and internal relations are important for mobilizing knowledge, social capital and networks (Gressgård 2011).

A number of activities contribute to developing and maintaining **constructive relationships**. Leadership that actively seeks to build, maintain and deepen the trust and commitment among partners can help build resilience over the longer term (Bryson et al. 2006, Gray & Stites 2013). Emotional engagement practices are important to build constructive involvement and participation (Sloan & Oliver 2010). Similarly, it is important to select partner members who have (or are interested in building) long-term working relationships and a demonstrated commitment to furthering collaborative initiatives (Shortell et al. 2002, van Huistee et al. 2007, Hartman & Dhanda 2018). Partnerships that achieved greater progress were able to use several strategies to manage and channel conflict in more positive directions than those that were less successful (Gray & Stites 2013, Bryson et al. 2006, 2015). Additionally, a notable element illustrated in the cases outlined above and in other similar engagements studied is that collaborations tend to enjoy more success when respected and independent third-party organizations are involved as facilitators and capacity builders (Murphy & Arenas 2010).

However well a partnership has been established, it will not last unless it can be shown that it is successful (McLean & Behringer 2008). A comprehensive evaluation of cross-sector partnerships needs to include attention to how a partnership functions as a collective to work towards their outcome objectives (Schulz et al. 2003). This can include whether and how multiple perspectives are engaged in the analysis and development of appropriate solutions to problems being addressed, as well as contributions of those working relationships to the ultimate outcomes. Understanding the different performance criteria that contribute to these is therefore important; and

evaluative tools – such as rubrics – that enable partnerships to assess their own dynamics in pursuit of these offer an important mechanism to take action and improve the working relationships that are central to efficient and effective collaboration (Schulz et al. 2003, Allen et al. 2018). While partnership evaluation literature covers a range of aspects, there is agreement in the literature that performance evaluation is key to a successful and continuing partnership (Piltan & Sowlati 2016), and ongoing learning in this way contributes to collaboration success (Gray & Stites 2013, Bryson et al. 2015). If partnerships are to realize their potential to work collaboratively, they must assess the quality of the working relationships that are central to this goal (Schulz et al. 2003).

As was the case with the SLO rubric above, in these complex settings, context is key and not all the criteria will be important in all situations. For example, Stronge et al (2019) identified five areas (common and agreed aims. Managing relationships, communications and engagement) where lessons pertinent to good partnership management emerged during the Taranaki myrtle rust incursion response.Similar  case studies on the myrtle rust incursion response (or other response operations) in other regions of the country would likely highlight additional criteria that managers need to consider as they assess the performance of their partnership initiatives – consequently, the rubric is designed to be tailored by those involved to include locally relevant considerations.

# 7 Partnerships rubric – with performance standard guidelines

**Table 2:** Partnerships rubric – with performance standard guidelines

| Performance Criteria | 1 | 2 | 3 | Evidence of Performance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Common & agreed aims/goals:** Strategic direction is jointly planned, theory of change set out and agreed. Mutual benefit is identified in agreed partnership outcomes and a shared agenda. Mandate and legitimacy are clarified and acknowledged. Plans (#s) are well documented, and targets and milestones are clearly set out. Partners prioritise joint work and their contribution to that. | | | | |
| **Joint activities & contributions:** Implementation is jointly planned, and synergies are identified. Partners integrate their delivery of joint work. The partnership has developed clear templates for processes and delegations. Risk management processes are mapped and followed. Contribution and alignment extend into partner agencies and work programmes. Collectively, partners have enough resources and capacity to undertake their aims. Targets and milestones are met – in terms of quality and timeliness. | | | | |
| **Communication & engagement:** Multiple communication channels and methods are in place. Communication is seen as including both one-way and two-way (dialogic) modes. Internally, partners freely share ideas and initiate dialogue. Final 'products' and documents have shared authorship and are exchanged on a regular basis. Communication links the immediate partnership back through the partners respective organisations/communities. Externally partners are well networked, and they maintain and build social capital external to the group. | | | | |
| **Managing relationships** Partners proactively discuss issues. Conflict situations are actively managed. Partner organisational culture supports participatory approaches. Partners 'back each other'. Multiple institutional linkages are in place between partners agencies. | | | | |
| **Monitoring and evaluation:** Partners regularly check in on each other and how they are going, both collectively and individually. Reflection is open and 'formalised' as part of regular practice. 'Lessons learned' are readily applied. | | | | |

*Assessment guide: 1 = Developing, 2 = Good, 3 = Excellent*

# 8 Strategic learning – using the rubrics

Strategic learning occurs when organizations or programmes integrate data and evaluative thinking into their work, and then adapt their strategies in response to what they learn (Coffman & Beer 2011). Organizations that take on these approaches do so because they appreciate that their plans – no matter how well specified – will have to shift as the circumstances around them evolve and change. Strategic learning provides that the lessons from planning, monitoring and evaluation and other data sources will be timely, actionable and forward-looking. It can help programme managers and staff to assess progress and gain insights that will help them make their next moves to build trust, partnerships and SLO in a way that increases the likelihood of success.

Importantly, the facilitated discussion (the process) that goes into the development of the rubric needs to be seen by agencies and operation managers as being as important as the developed rubric (the product) (Allen et al. 2018). The development and use of the rubrics create the "structure" for learning, and function as living documents that are equally relevant for planning and evaluation activities (Lynn & Stokes 2012). In turn, facilitated strategic learning debriefs can create the "space" for learning through reflective practice to help move from learning to action. The rubrics provided here are intended as templates to support a facilitated process of rubric development and use.

These rubrics should be introduced to teams with the guidance of those with the process skills to help teams:

- refine them for their own individual context; and
- to utilise them to guide planning, implementation and evaluation.

In a strategic learning-based approach to improve the quality of activities to promote cross-sector partnerships and SLO it is important that programme staff (and key individuals from their wider organizations and other stakeholder groups) are actively involved from the start. Accordingly, these key players should collectively review and adapt the indicative rubrics (templates) for use in their own settings. In this way they are more likely to begin to understand that evaluation and learning are not processes that happen independently from operational design and its ongoing implementation. Rather evaluation provides a framework to support an in-action (reflecting on activities as they are being done) and after-action (following completion) learning-based approach to operation management.

Ensuring good project planning that maximises best practice in things like participation and collaboration and considers the influence of these on elements such as trust is important. In turn, appropriately structured programme and operational plans (especially those that have been developed through a participatory process) provide an opportunity for involving groups in a facilitated strategic learning process. These provide a guide to encourage participation in the capture the lessons learned from past successes and failures, with the goal of improving future performance. In a strategic learning debrief, participants review: i) what was intended (activity aims); ii) what 'actually' happened (intended and unintended outcomes); iii) why these things happened and what was learned. This goes beyond monitoring and evaluation processes that end with a project or activity to help begin the next cycle of planning.

Activity review documentation should include the following information on each outcome:

- Who did it (or contributed to it)?
- How do we know this?
- Why is this important?

Such learning debriefs can be used in short, frequent group process checks, or more extended, in-depth explorations. In this way they also contribute to improving activity implementation on an ongoing basis.

For more information see: http://learningforsustainability.net/reflective-practice/

# 9 Conclusions

The rubrics provided here provide a mechanism to help MPI and other agency biosecurity teams to develop clarity around the different components that underpin SLO and engagement, and as a tool to guide and evaluate progress in these areas. Through this report Social Licence to Operate and Cross-sector Partnerships (as an exemplary example of two-way engagement) are unpacked into their key constituent components. Support for the importance of these components are provided through both reviews of international experience, and the more immediate and localized experiences gained through the recent Myrtle Rust incursion response. Indicative rubrics are presented for helping agencies plan and assess their activities to strengthen and maintain both SLO and cross-sector partnership efforts with their different partner and stakeholder communities.

As a tool, the development and application of a such rubrics can help biosecurity agencies to progressively engage more meaningfully with partners and stakeholders and enter dialogue based on participation, trust and understanding. Rubrics identify what matters in efforts to develop and maintain both social licence to operate and cross-sector partnerships – both as exemplars of good engagement, and how to assess such initiatives in terms of what can be confidently regarded as good practice. These rubrics can be used to help introduce a systematic approach to plan such activities and to provide a practical mechanism to clarify the benefits of these efforts to all participants.

A remaining challenge is to get agencies and other key stakeholder groups to see rubrics as both process and product that moves beyond their use in evaluation to increase effectiveness and capacity to work more collectively toward agreed outcomes. In turn, this will require operational biosecurity teams to include people with skills in surfacing diverse perspectives of operations, listening and actively engaging with a range of partners. This recognises the intent of the Biosecurity 2025 Direction Statement which emphasises the need for agencies to work more closely with communities in future biosecurity operations. In doing so they will need to use tools such as these rubrics to adapt their process to be progressively more inclusive and aware of community concerns, including those related to how response operations are conducted.

# 10 Recommendations

It is recommended that MPI and other biosecurity agencies:

In the short-term:

- Introduce the SLO rubric (with facilitation support) to identify pilot areas where teams and programmes can actively explore how to improve the planning and assessment of operational SLO activities.
- Introduce the Partnership rubric (with facilitation support) to identify pilot areas where teams and programmes want to actively explore how to improve the planning and assessment of operational partnership activities.
- Utilise the rubrics approach to develop a shared understanding of multi-partner situations across a range of performance areas. This is particularly useful in areas (e.g. welfare) where different partners and stakeholders hold diverse views what this means in practice.

In the medium term:

- Work with these initial SLO and partnerships rubrics (or some similar tools) to introduce key staff to their development and use in practice, and to ensure that all partnerships and SLO initiatives are planned and their performance assessed with the benefit of guidance that these tools provide.

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