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Australia's National
Science Agency

A playbook for agile programs and sprints in research institutions

Developed by Accelio in collaboration with CSIRO

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Acknowledgments
This playbook was developed by Accelio Pty Ltd in collaboration with CSIRO Health and Biosecurity, drawing on lessons from the Innovation for Biosecurity Initiative (Biosecurity APaIR) and related Agile Impact Program activities.

We gratefully acknowledge Dr Paul De Barro for his enduring contribution to research translation at CSIRO and for the practical insights, data, and learnings that informed the development of this playbook.

We also acknowledge Dr Raghu Sathyamurthy for his leadership and sponsorship of the Biosecurity APaIR initiative and for his continued support of this work and its publication.

Additional thanks are extended to the many CSIRO researchers, mentors, and leaders who participated in Agile Impact Program sprints, shared their experiences, and provided valuable feedback that strengthened this framework. Their openness to experimentation and reflection helped ensure that the Agile Translation Framework was tested and refined within a live research environment.

CSIRO acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands, seas and waters on which we live and work across Australia, and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Content

CSIRO and Accelio forewords

Australia's ability to deliver real-world impact from science is central to our national future. Yet too often, research translation remains aspirational rather than operational. At CSIRO, we have long recognised that new ways of working are needed, ones that integrate research excellence with relevance, structure with agility, and discovery with delivery.

Through the APAIR Biosecurity Program, we've had the opportunity to trial a different approach. One grounded not just in entrepreneurial methods, but in institutional design. Over the last two years, this collaboration with Accelio has helped us explore how to embed translation into the rhythms, forums, and priorities of research programs. What emerged is a framework for agile translation, tested in context, led by science, and designed to scale.

With over 30 years of hands-on experience in applied research and national program leadership, I've seen firsthand what it takes to move ideas through the system. This work has reaffirmed that translation success isn't driven by heroes or templates, it comes from aligning people, structure, and intent. This playbook captures that system and offers it to others as a practical model for accelerating institutional impact.

Dr Paul De Barro
Senior Principal Research Scientist
CSIRO

For more than a decade, I've worked at the intersection of strategy, innovation and transformation across Australia's largest enterprises, government agencies and academic institutions.

Accelio was founded to help institutions turn ambition into embedded execution, designing operating systems that move ideas from intent to impact. We've spent years honing our craft, building sprint-based programs that help organisations, leaders and teams accelerate their most ambitious impact initiatives.

What made our collaboration with CSIRO so special was the opportunity to embed over a decade of lived experience and our signature methodologies into the heart of a large institution, not as a side initiative but as a scalable part of how science is delivered.

Our partnership with Paul, the CSIRO Health and Biosecurity team, and executive sponsorship from Raghu combined decades of practical experience with a shared commitment to testing and applying this model in a live operating environment. Over two years, we worked side by side with research leaders and translation teams to co-design and stress-test what has become the Agile Translation Operating System outlined in this playbook.

Nick Rakis
Founder and Principal
ACCELIO

In 2022, CSIRO took a calculated leap of faith by making a significant internal investment in its Biosecurity Program; the objective of the investment was to progress innovative translation of science and technology to support Australia's future biosecurity needs aligned with national strategic priorities. Some 50 researchers spanning seven of CSIRO's Research Units embraced this 3y experimental journey (both through their science and their teams) to undertake translational science not just by intent, but by design.

The Accelio Agile Sprint Framework, which builds on and fills some key gaps of other translational uplift programs, was co-designed by Accelio (Nick Rakis) and CSIRO (Paul De Barro) in parallel to support this Innovation for Biosecurity Initiative (internally known as Biosecurity APaIR). The framework was instrumental in constructively challenging teams to (a) maintain a relentless focus on science in service of an unmet need, (b) understand the breadth of complementary skills (in addition to excellent science) and culture needed to be successful in this endeavour and (c) build a portfolio of translational research. Central to this endeavour was confronting the myth that this approach is only relevant to research and development with a strictly commercial outcome; the Framework proved equally relevant to biosecurity as a service and as a business.

While the Biosecurity program within CSIRO may be the initial beneficiary of this work, there are encouraging signs that the learnings are permeating more broadly across teams and Research Units in CSIRO and beyond. Through this playbook, I look forward to seeing how the broader research and innovation community can reap the rewards by adopting and adapting this valuable framework, and the accompanying translational mindset.

Dr Raghu Sathyamurthy
Research Director and Portfolio Sponsor
Health and Biosecurity
CSIRO

1 Intention

Across Australia, research institutions invest heavily in science and innovation to address complex national challenges. Yet despite strong science and sustained investment, many programs struggle to translate their work into solutions that are adopted and used.

This gap between research activity and real-world uptake is often described as the innovation valley of death. It reflects a systemic issue: translation is often treated as something that happens after research is complete, rather than being embedded from the outset.

Through the Health and Biosecurity Program at CSIRO, we chose a different approach.

Rather than optimising for research output alone, the program was designed around translation intent. This meant prioritising real problems, validating unmet needs with those who experience them, and shaping research outputs to support clear pathways to use and sustained impact.

Translation-first thinking reframes how decisions are made. It starts with unmet need and real-world demand, then aligns science capability toward outcomes that are taken up and applied.

While often conflated with commercialisation, translation in this context is broader. It is about ensuring research creates value through use, whether public, policy-driven, service-based, or commercial.

Embedding translation intent required the program to be structured differently. The emphasis shifted toward building translation capability: deeper engagement with customers and end-users, deliberate cultural change, and the creation of an operating system that makes translation repeatable and embedded within the institution.

Over two years, CSIRO Health and Biosecurity partnered with Accelio to design, test, and refine this approach in a live research environment. The Agile Translation Operating System captured in this playbook reflects that lived experience.

This playbook distils the lessons and practical mechanisms developed through that collaboration. It provides leaders with a tested framework for embedding translation as a core institutional capability.

Guiding principle

"You won't achieve impact if nobody wants what you have made."

To deliver on this principle, the shift to a translation mindset was achieved by:

1. Strengthening the capacity and capabilities of teams to support translation in practice.

2. Prioritising customer and end-user insights to validate true unmet needs before committing significant effort.

3. Creating permission for teams to adapt direction, budgets, and workflows in response to evidence and emerging information.

4. Aligning leadership, structures, and processes to reinforce translation as a default way of working.

Focus on teams alone is insufficient. Leaders must decide whether their institution is designed to support translation in practice, through the structures, rhythms, and operating systems that govern how research is delivered. This playbook sets out a practical basis for making those choices.

2 Executive summary

Most research institutions aspire to generate real-world impact from their science by shifting from invention through to innovation, yet few have built the operating systems required to do so consistently.

Definitions*

Invention: Is the product of an idea. A unique or novel device, process, method. It has no inherent value.

Innovation: Execution of new ideas to create value; value is created through use.

Translation: Is the process whereby an idea is turned into a product or service which is then used to create value and impact.

**Based on the definitions by Tim Kastelle*

In most cases, the focus on driving this change has been on the researchers, not on the leaders and the structures they put in place and the processes they utilise. The last decade has seen considerable investment in upskilling researchers on entrepreneurship, commercialisation and innovation ecosystems. Despite this effort, most research still struggles to leave the lab and create sustained public or market value. In other words, research remains an activity of invention with innovation being the exception rather than the rule. What's missing is a system that embeds innovation as a business-as-usual process. It achieves this by taking the entrepreneurial skills, tools and mindset that researchers learn in various programs, and puts them into a supporting system that operates within the home unit in which the researchers work.

This playbook provides a guide to building that system. It introduces a new way forward, one grounded in the lessons of real implementation across CSIRO's Health and Biosecurity and Environment business units. Developed in collaboration with Accelio, the Agile Translation Framework brings structure, cadence, and cultural reinforcement to the challenge of accelerating research translation within complex institutions.

This model embeds translation directly into the delivery of science rather than relying solely on one-off programs, disconnected workshops, or the heroics of individual researchers. It starts with the alignment of programs, sprints, leadership forums and structures, and decision-making rhythms, not with the science we do or the capability that we have. It aligns these in an institutional design process that views problems and their possible solutions by exploring unmet needs through the eyes of those who are expected to want and use the solutions.

The Playbook's approach is rooted in well developed and understood technology and production methods such as double diamond, agile manifesto, human centered design and the product operating model to name a few. Together, it is built on two years of practical application across more than a dozen crossdisciplinary teams, and drawing on over 30 years of experience, this frame-work provides,

- A system architecture that integrates translation into research strategy
- A program structure and leadership that supports cultural change over time
- A sprint model embedded in a broader program that accelerates evidence generation and decision-making over the life of the project
- A set of principles, practices and preconditions to guide implementation and delivery

This playbook is a strategic operating system for leaders, tested in context, that provides a pathway for institutional translation to be repeatable, scalable and applicable.

3 Reframing the translation gap and the unmet need

Translation isn't a stage in the process; it is the process, a mindset driven by intent from the start.

An increasing number of institutions recognise the need to improve how research connects to impact. However, the approaches usually adopted are those that remain rooted in a traditional discovery to delivery pipeline. This mental model tends to follow a linear journey, from idea, to invention, to innovation. In this framing, translation is something that happens after the science is "ready", and the product has been baked. For many researchers and their leaders, the end point is an invention – the product, the generation of protectable IP and publications.

This is insufficient, and our approach, challenges that notion.

Our view is that translation is the process, where the supporting mindset and method are embedded from the beginning, not as a downstream event. This is translation-first thinking.

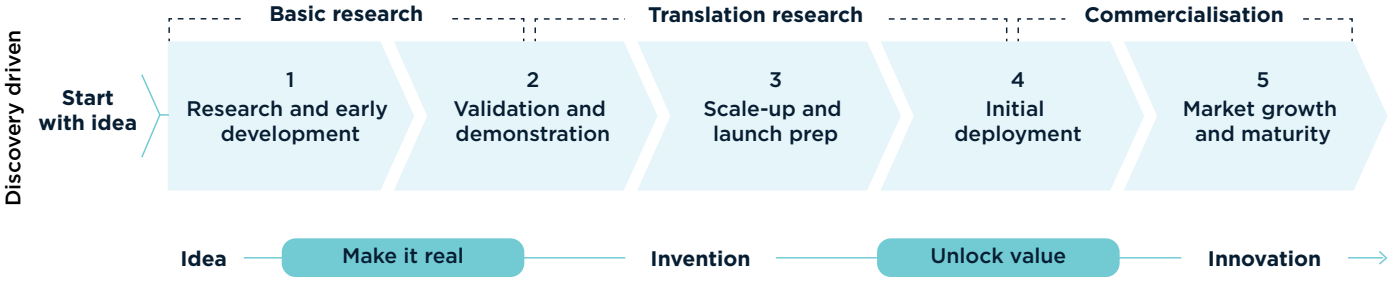


Figure 1: The Traditional Translation Model

Translation-first thinking reframes the research process around real-world relevance, not just scientific novelty.

It begins by making a deliberate effort to ask who are we trying to help, and how will we know if what we're doing matters to them? It does not start with our science, and our people and what they can do. Translation-first thinking seeks to ensure that research outputs address an unmet need for which a solution is both needed and will be used. Critically the need is validated through the insights gained from customers and end-users.

In our experience across CSIRO and other national organisations, the true translation gap is the absence of a deliberate operating system to enable translation to be practiced routinely, not the absence of ideas, funding, or talent. By deliberate operating system we mean, the establishment of governance, structure, and support such that translation is no longer an aspiration, it is a commitment that is supported and resourced through a program lifecycle. It shifts the responsibility from one that is borne by the teams to one that is shared across the organisation.

Research translation as a purposeful discipline and a practiced routine breaks down when Direction, Structure and Support are not deliberately established within the organisation.

It happens when:

- Strategy and ideas are disconnected from customer and end-user needs.
- Programs and projects operate in silos without alignment, learning loops, and feedback from organisational decision makers.
- Teams are expected to deliver on impact without structural supports.

Translation requires institutional redesign that treats it as a system, not a slogan.

The challenge isn't a lack of entrepreneurial mindset or more capability training; it's that the underlying system doesn't enable these interventions to stick. Without an operating environment built for translation, cultural change and skills uplift remain isolated events, not sustained practice.

Designing research programs with translation intent means starting with a clear focus on the real-world problem to be addressed.

The first step is to define the focus area, then engage directly with customers and end-users to understand the problem and confirm the need for possible solutions.

From the outset, the process includes IP, Business Development (BD), Commercialisation, and subject matter experts. They contribute to shaping the problem and solution space, gathering early evidence to reduce risk and guide the science. This ensures that effort is directed where it will have the most impact. We involve them when the product is still water, yeast and flour, not when it is already a loaf of bread.

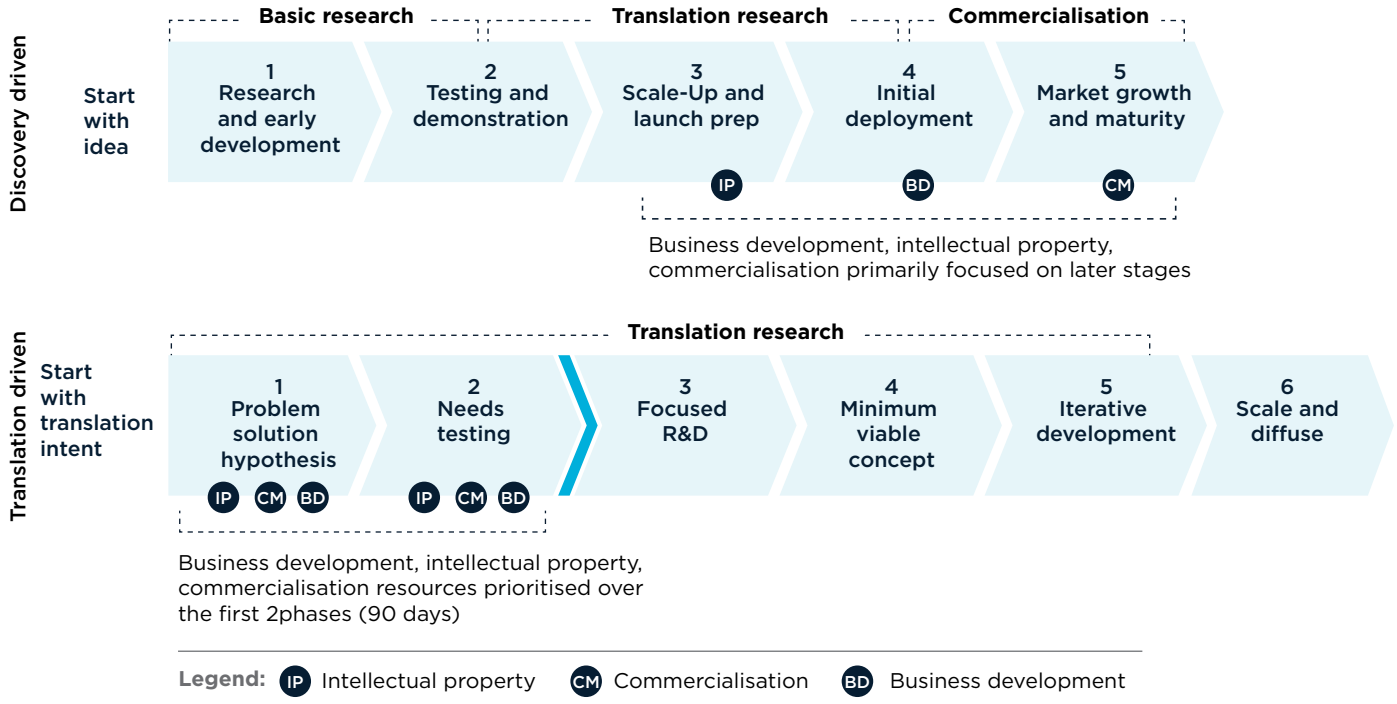


Figure 2: Traditional translation model verses model driven by translation intent

Starting with translation intent means redesigning the system

Addressing the translation gap requires leaders to think well beyond process. A process can be mapped, trained, and even mandated, but translation intent lives inside an organisational system.

If that system is still optimised for discovery-first research, then no amount of process improvement will deliver consistent impact.

Shifting an organisation to operate with translation intent demands redesign, or at least deliberate adjustment, of the system's core attributes: leadership, strategy, structure, processes and metrics.

These elements must reinforce translation as a default way of working, not an occasional exception.

In a translation-driven environment:

- Leadership actively sponsors translation, creates permission to stop or pivot, and makes speed of decision a priority.
- Strategy starts with validated unmet needs and measures progress against real-world adoption, not just publications or IP filings.
- Structure aligns cross-disciplinary teams with embedded commercial, IP and stakeholder engagement from day one.

- Processes operate on short learning cycles, with evidence driving iteration and next-step investment.
- Metrics focus on validated demand, stakeholder engagement and time-to-decision, not just research milestones.

The posture toward risk and speed is what most defines the experience of working in a translation-driven environment.

Why translation feels different

In discovery risk is technical and timelines stretch to fit the research.

In translation customer risk comes first and speed drives every decision because the world will not wait for perfect science.

Markets, policies and operational environments will not wait for perfect science before deciding whether to adopt. Agile and Lean practices thrive here, using short cycles, rapid feedback and fast course correction.

Translation does not wait for the science to be ready. It moves quickly to test the hypothesis against urgent unmet needs before major scientific effort is committed. This shift in risk focus and tempo changes how teams work day-to-day, what leaders prioritise, and how decisions are made.

Without this systemic shift, entrepreneurial uplift will always fall short. Skills and mindset matter, but in an environment still built for discovery, the gains will fade. The next section explores why entrepreneurial education, while valuable, reaches its limits without organisational redesign to hold and scale it.

Discovery driven approach

Leadership	**Research leader** Principal investigator led, publications and grants
Strategy	**Invention driven** Funds the most promising technology until it's "certain"
Structure	**Functional** Sequential delivery form R&D > IP > BD > Commercialse
Process	**Linear R&D** Stage-Gate milestones
Metrics	**Academic outputs** Publications, disclosures, grant $
Speed	**Measured pace** Multi-year plans, scale technology
Risk	**Reduce technical risk** Cut technical risk; avoid deviation

Translation driven approach

Leadership	**Translation leaders** Translation orientated leaders with strong domain knowledge to clear blockers and help coach
Strategy	**Market hypothesis driven** Start with unmet need hypothesis
Structure	**Agile sprints** Agile integrated translation teams Integrated science, R&D, IP, BD, commercial
Process	**Stage gate and metered funding** Science is progressed on translation potential (learning and funding gates)
Metrics	**Market validation** Ecosystem coverage, stakeholder insights and needs driven.
Speed	**Rapid pace** Short cycle sprints, encourage pivots from real world insights
Risk	**Reduces market risk** Prioritises reducing customer and ecosystem risk as highest priority

Figure 3: Discovery-Driven vs Translation-Driven System.
Inspired by Steve Blank, Harvard Business Review, May 2013

Entrepreneurial skills can inspire, but only a redesigned system can sustain translation.

4 The limits of entrepreneurial uplift

Entrepreneurial uplift has helped, but it is limited by the organisation's system design.

Over the past decade, many research organisations have used entrepreneurial education to strengthen translation and impact. Programs such as Lean LaunchPad and ON Prime have improved awareness of external engagement through customer discovery, building commercial fluency among scientists. They have added value, but also revealed their limits.

> Entrepreneurial programs are valuable for capability building, but they often equate translation with commercialisation, overlooking the broader intent of translation. Translation intent is about ensuring research outputs are useful, wanted, and applied, regardless of the pathway taken.

These programs typically centre on the idea and the team, often outside their operational home unit and institutional context. Teams go through the motions of thinking and acting like entrepreneurial scientists, yet many are not. Their ideas are rarely independently commercialisable, and their work often remains closely tied to institutional strategies or dependencies. Participants may return inspired but without the support structures needed to sustain new behaviours. In most cases, they revert to institutional defaults focused on discovery rather than translation.

Without an embedded system to sustain translation behaviours, the benefits of entrepreneurial uplift fade quickly.

True translation requires institutional structures that connect entrepreneurial capability to the organisation's translation intent. Even research for public good must be wanted, used, and applied in the real world.

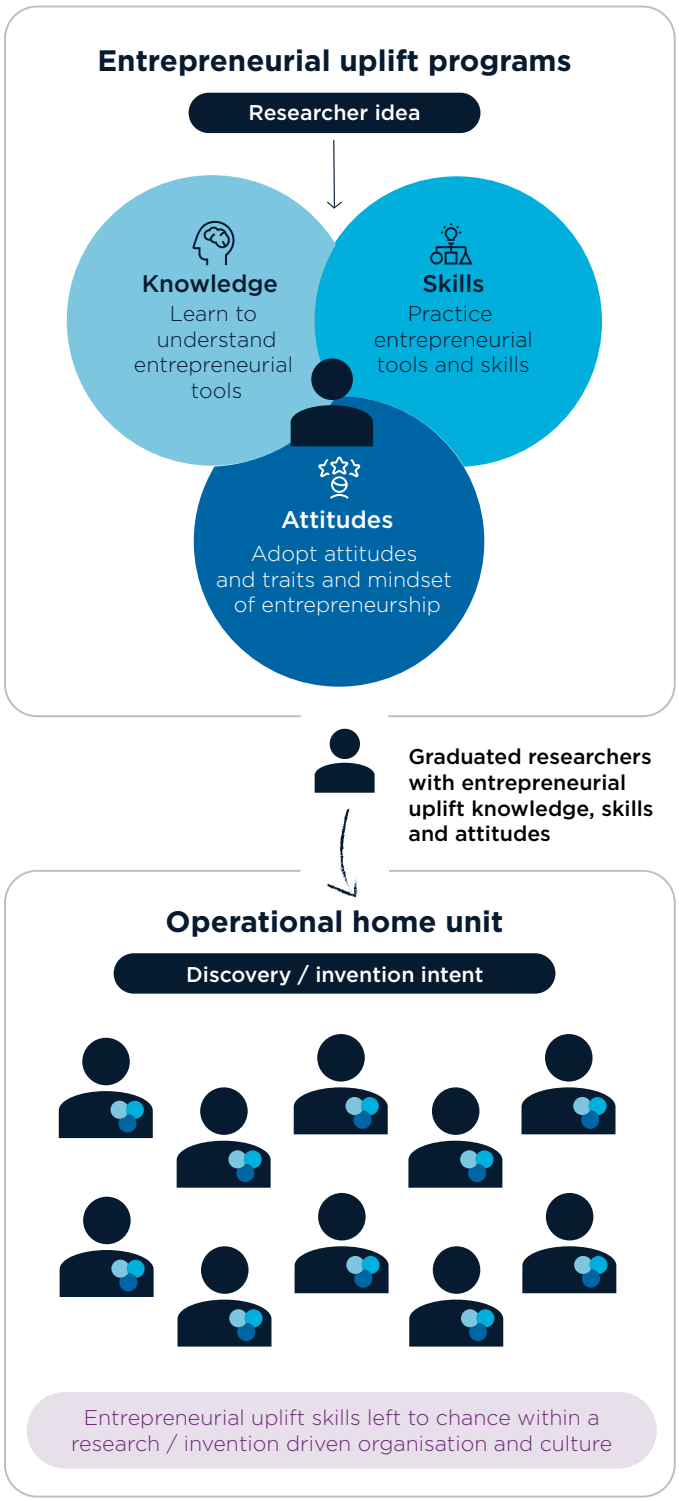


Figure 4: Entrepreneurial uplift in absence of supporting translation operating system and organisation unit

Culture doesn't drive translation on its own, it is reinforced by the systems, rhythms, and structures of an Agile Translation OS.

5 The agile translation operating system

Research translation often fails not because of a lack of ideas, funding, or talent, but because institutions lack an operating system that supports translation as a sustained practice. Without structures, rhythms, and clear intent, entrepreneurial uplift and capability programs remain isolated events rather than integrated ways of working.

The Agile Translation Operating System (OS) addresses this gap. It combines direction, structure, and support with proven entrepreneurial methods, embedding them into the operational home. The framework is designed to be repeatable, scalable, and durable over multi-year programs, ensuring translation is reinforced through culture and sustained by organisational scaffolding.

At a high level, the agile translation framework is built around three layers:

- **Outer ring - organisational scaffolding:** Strategy, leadership, structure, process, metrics, and people. This scaffolding sets the conditions for translation, shapes culture, and ensures it is reinforced over time.
- **Middle ring - research program:** A multi-year program that gives translation a home. It provides teams with a stable base that is translation-driven, aligning them with organisational priorities and ensuring continuity.
- **Centre - Accelio impact sprint:** A 90-day acceleration phase that drives translation from the outset. It is the engine that identifies and validates real-world problems, informs science strategy, and accelerates early progress — creating a flywheel for ongoing translation activity.

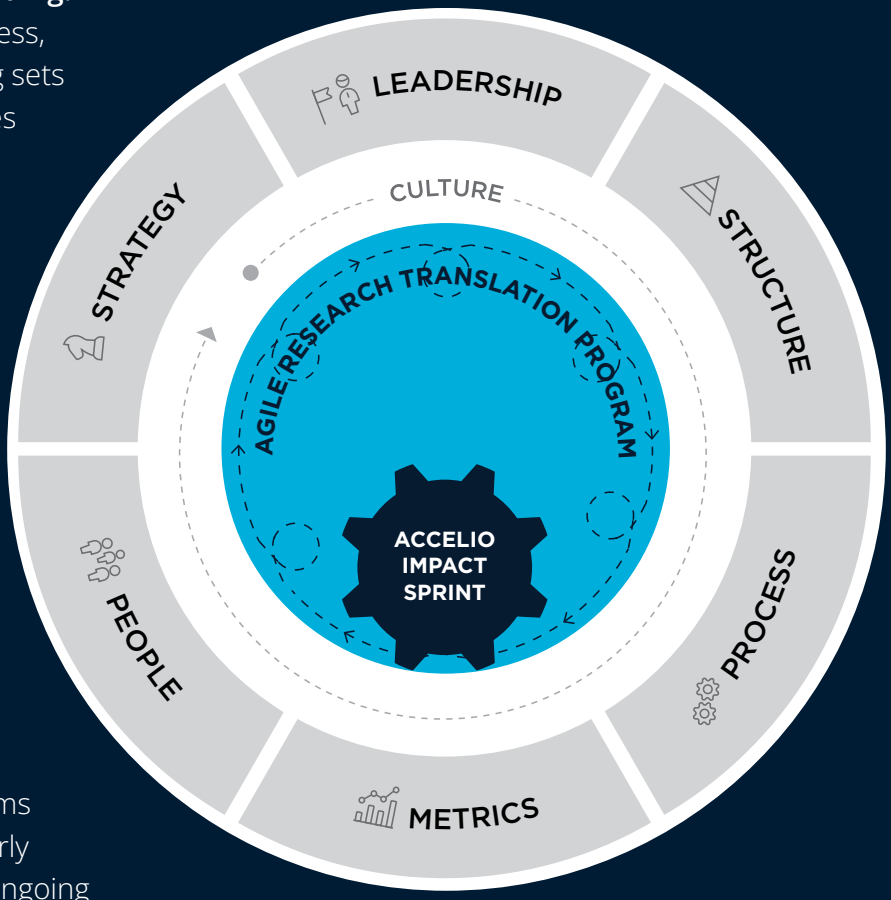


Figure 5: The Agile Translation Framework. Adapted.

The Agile Translation OS acts as the scaffolding that bridges the gap between individual capability uplift and sustained translation practice.

Entrepreneurial programs can build attitudes, skills, and knowledge, but without an operating system to return to, these gains often fade.

The OS ensures researchers and scientists re-enter the research program as the core translation vehicle, an operational home unit designed for translation intent, not discovery. This home is where translation programs live and where teams work within a structure built to identify how science can address a true unmet need.

At its core, the Agile Translation OS provides reinforcing architecture for:

- Direction: Sets a clear translation intent, ensuring teams focus on real-world problems and unmet needs, and understand how their work connects to organisational priorities.
- Structure: Establishes the governance, rhythms, and processes that enable translation work to progress, adapt, and integrate into decision-making forums.
- Support: Provides the people, tools, and resources that teams need to navigate translation pathways, reduce risk, and accelerate progress.

It gives research teams a stable container to operate in, where translation goals are clear, support is embedded, and systems actively drive progress.

Over multi-year programs, this scaffolding strengthens team outcomes, aligns efforts with organisational priorities, and makes translation an integrated, repeatable practice.

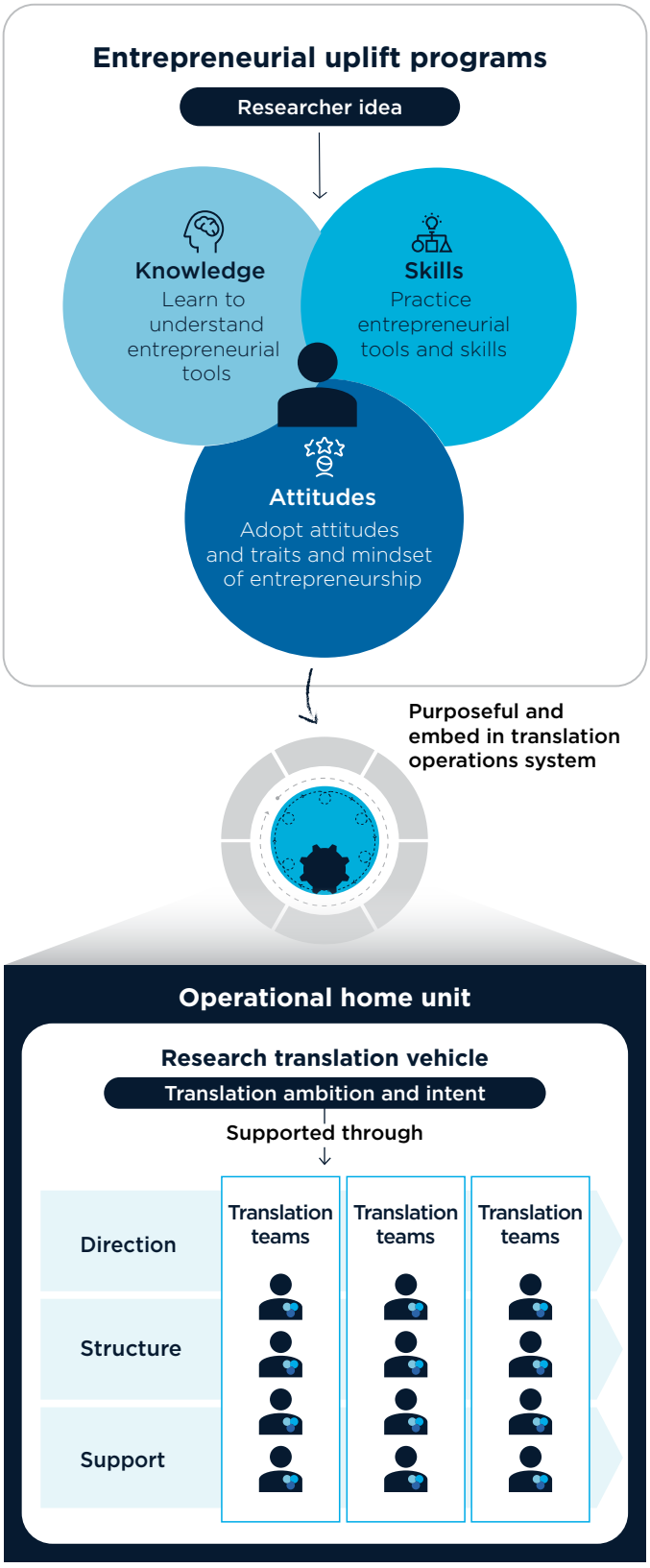


Figure 6: Entrepreneurial uplift embedded within a translation supporting framework in the operational home unit. Adopted Accelio Fast-Trac Venture building methodology © 2022

Translation doesn't stick without a home.

The Agile Translation Operating System gives teams a place to anchor, align, and deliver impact.

6 Inside the agile translation operating system

The agile translation OS is the environment that carries research from idea to sustained impact.

It closes the gap where projects begin with intent but lack the structure to deliver. The OS moves work through five stages: Inputs, Define, Test, Translate, and Sustain. Each stage has clear activities, decision points, and support structures that keep teams moving forward.

It starts with the fundamental question

> *Should we do the research in the first place?*

Stage 0 | Inputs

Every journey starts with a clear program intent, defined focus areas, and selected projects. This ensures effort is directed toward problems that matter. Early scoping identifies the unmet need, possible pathways, and likely translation vehicles.

Stage 1 | Define

Teams work to prove they can clearly define the problem they aim to solve. They outline credible candidate solutions. This stage includes a set of diagnostic questions (De Barro and Anderson 2023) drawn from decades of translation experience and research into why projects fail. These questions test the evidence for the need, the problem definition, and the demand for a solution.

Teams back up their answers through fact-finding, stakeholder engagement, and a testing plan. The goal is to build a strong evidence base before significant resources are committed.

Stage 2 | Test

Teams test their science or capability against realworld unmet needs. The Accelio Impact Sprint sits at the centre of this stage. It is a 90-day cycle that engages the ecosystem, tests assumptions, and produces an impact plan and roadmap. External insights shape the science, and risks are reduced before moving to solution build.

Stage 3 | Translate

If testing shows strong fit, teams begin turning their science into a product, service, or method that addresses the targeted need. This stage combines agile principles, program management, and regular checkpoints with business development, commercial, and IP input in parallel.

Stage 4 | Sustain

The final stage focuses on securing ongoing use and funding. Teams show that their science is being applied, is creating value, and has a path to scale through external funding and partnerships.

Stage 5 | Sprints as part of the system

In the Agile Translation OS, sprints are part of the program structure. Insights are captured, shared, and acted on across the lifecycle, often over two to three years. This helps teams build momentum and maintain progress.

Stage 6 | Go/No-Go as a calibration tool

Go/No-Go points are used to test and strengthen the work. They are open discussions, not pass-or-fail assessments. The aim is to stress-test the pathway forward, challenge assumptions, and improve the work. This approach keeps pace high while allowing the program to adapt to new information.

Every stage of the agile translation OS is designed to reduce risk, align effort, and accelerate progress, while staying flexible to new insights.

The agile translation framework

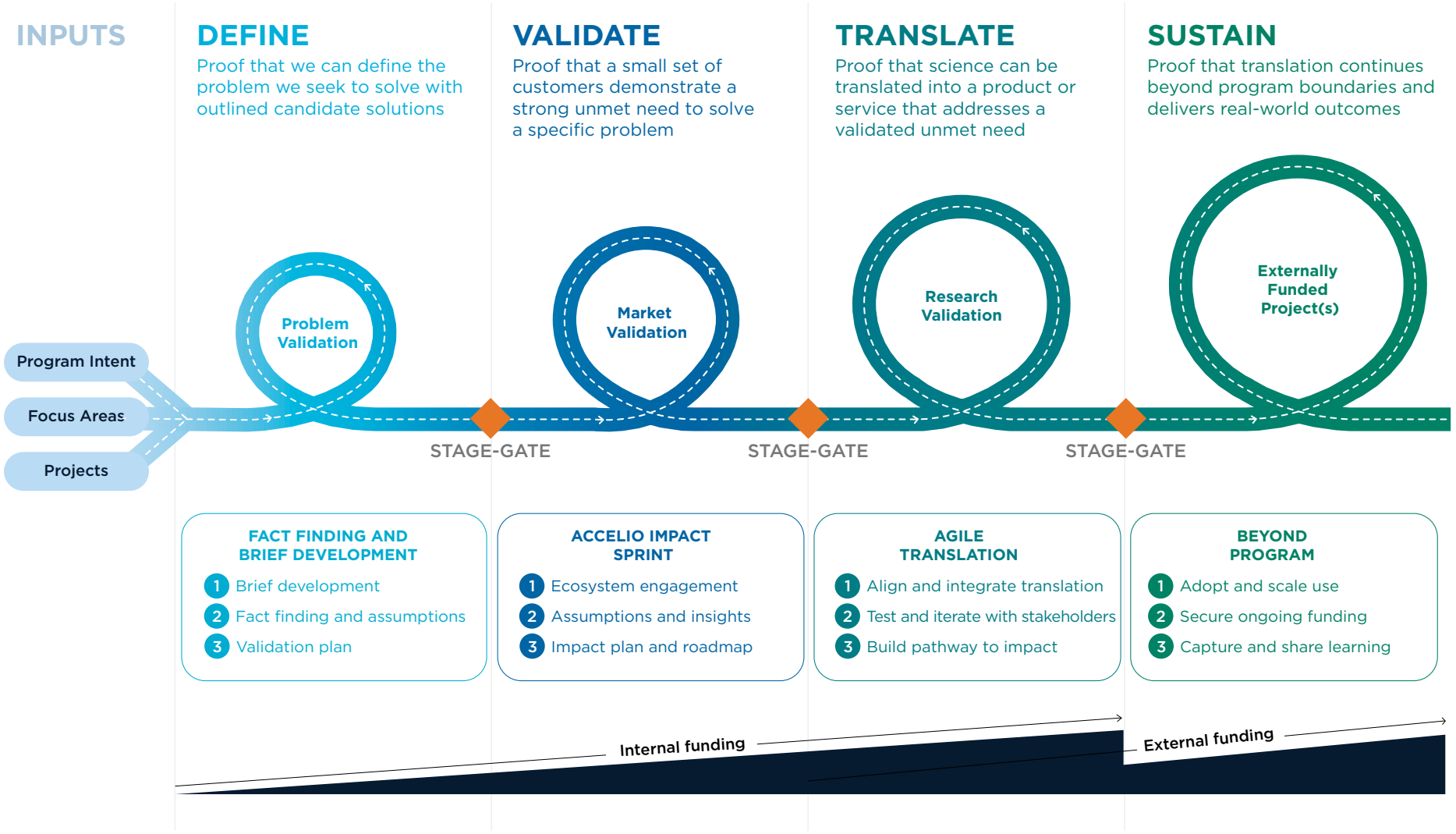


Figure 7: Agile Translation Framework. Adopted Accelio Innovation Fast-Trac © 2018

Questions to ask to establish if you should do this

The questions teams need to answer as part of determining whether they should proceed further with developing their solution.

Intervention and target audience

- What's the problem? What intervention does this support?
- Who needs it?
- What is the unmet need?
- How big is the problem?

Prototype solution

- What technologies etc could be used to provide this solution?
- How is it going to be used?
- Is it a product or service?
- Where is it going to be used?
- When will it be used?
- How often will it be used?
- Why wouldn't it be used?
- Does it fit into an existing workflow? What needs to change?
- How is the problem solved right now?
- How else could the problem be solved?
- What are the technical barriers that you need to overcome?
- How feasible is this? Think of this in terms of (a) the science (b) capacity (c) capability (d) money (e) time
- Do you have freedom to operate? Are there IP hurdles that you need to overcome?
- Is this a technology platform?
- In what other domains/fields could the tech be used for?

Usage Remuneration

- How will it be paid for?
- Is there a clear remuneration step?
- Is this the only market?

Market analysis

- What is the market?
- How do you access the market?

Regulatory, quality, agreements

- Does is it involve some sort of regulatory process or agreement? Will any of these need to change or be renegotiated? If so, how long does that usually take?
- Does the research need to be done under a quality standard?

Project execution, timelines, costs, resources

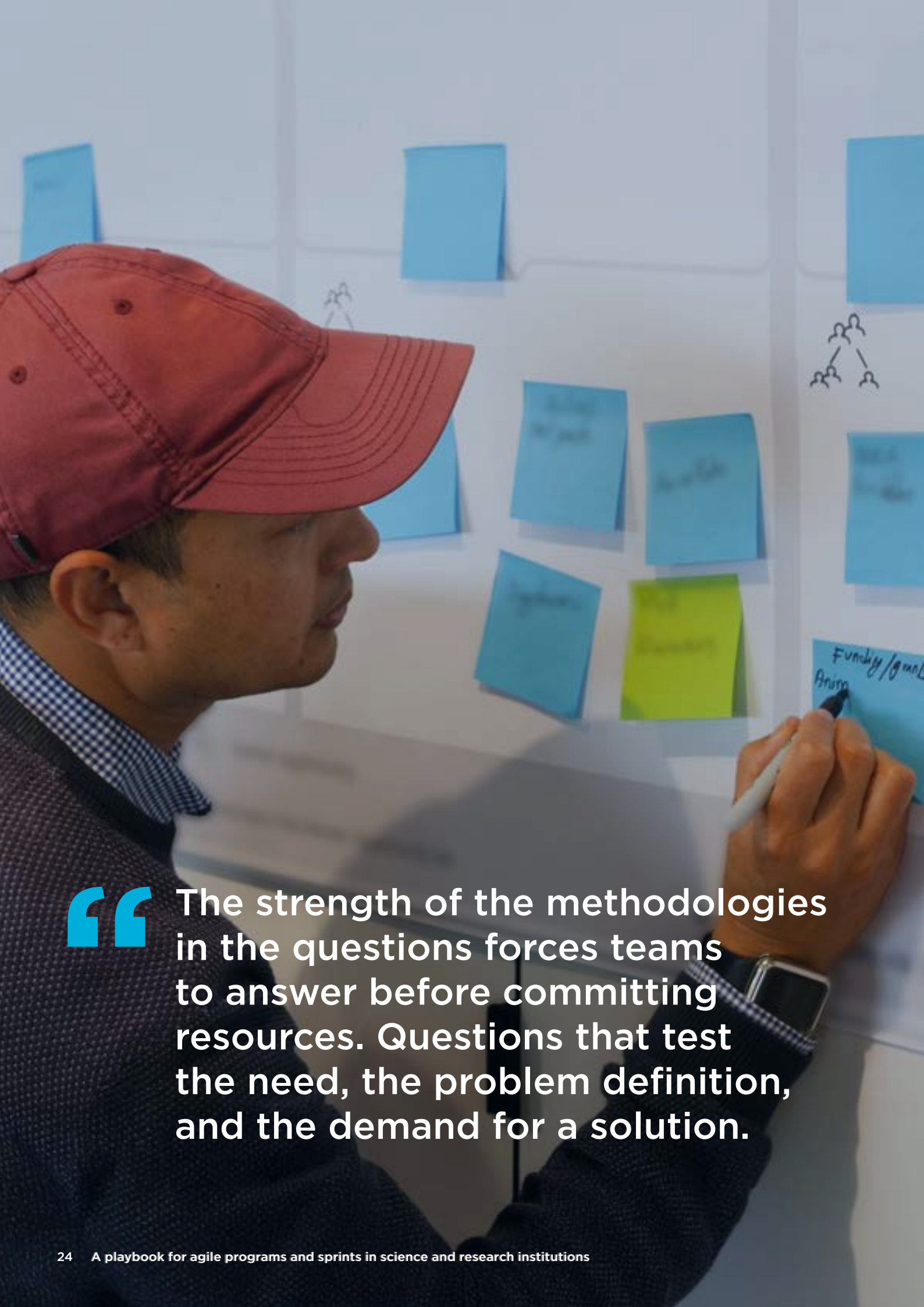
- Who will build it, test it, get it through regulations, get it made at scale and sell it?
- How long will it take to get to a stage that is attractive to the "next in line" translation partner?
- Do you have the necessary 'where with all' to do this ?

Competitors and partners

- Who is your first translation/channel partner? user/adopter/ channel partner?
- What is the current competition (what is currently used, what is in development?)
- What evidence do you have to demonstrate that your approach is competitive and offers advantages over existing solutions?
- Who are the potential commercial partners?
- What evidence do you have your approach is competitive?

Human-centered design

- Have you explored the human desirability dimension in determining the solution to the problem/unmet need?



> The strength of the methodologies in the questions forces teams to answer before committing resources. Questions that test the need, the problem definition, and the demand for a solution.

7 Leadership and governance in the agile translation OS

Leadership and governance provide the rhythms, practices, and forums that keep translation on track

Governance in the Agile Translation OS refers to the operating-level rhythms, practices, and forums that span all three structural layers: the Accelio Impact Sprint, the Program, and the Research Unit.

Each layer has tailored governance, from strategy through to people. What makes the OS effective is the interconnection between these layers. A deliberate set of reinforcing rhythms and practices that create an integrated system and working environment. This is what enables teams to progress their projects across a multi-year timeframe.

LAYERS	STRATEGY	STRUCTURE	LEADERSHIP	PROCESS	METRICS	PEOPLE
Research Unit	Research Unit Sponsor	Multi-year Program (budget and resource allocation)	Agile Leadership	Steering Committee and Program Team	Investment Case Milestones	Shared People and Capability
Program	Dedicated Program Sponsor (Program Owner)	Agreed Projects (with Translation Intent)	Agile Weekly Touchpoints	Monthly and Quarterly Cadence Report	Stage-Gate Program Metrics	Program Management Support
	Program Purpose and Mandate (objective) + Domain Expertise	Dedicated Program Resources and Budget	Monthly Knowledge Sharing	Market Evidence Report Card	IP, Legal, Commercialisation Support	Allocated Program Resources
Impact Sprint	Allocated Project Lead	Design Sprint Based Structure	Initiative Questions and Brief	Ecosystem Engagement	Dedicated Translation Team	Allocated Project Lead
	Program Strategic led Project	Cohort Based Learning Environment	Iterative Sprint Cadence (fortnightly)	Market Insights and Evidence Gathering	Science, Commercial, IP and Market Mentoring and Support	Program Strategic Led Project

Figure 8: Leadership and Governanace in the Agile Translation OS. Adopted Accelio Fast-Trac Scaffolding © 2018

Governance is not just about oversight. It is about **reinforcing mechanisms** that provide clarity, alignment, and accountability in a high-uncertainty environment. Strong leadership, coupled with science and business mentors, structured learning forums, and domain knowledge forums, tech translation domain expertise, ensures teams have the support, challenge, and pressure they need to accelerate translation. Translation is not easy.

It involves uncertainty, shifting priorities, and roadblocks. These reinforcing mechanisms keep teams moving, help them navigate obstacles, and strengthen their ability to make progress on complex, high-stakes projects.

Key leadership elements embedded in the OS include:

- Translation Sponsors: Senior figures who provide strategic rationale and direction, and enable fast decision-making.
- Science and business mentors: Leaders who help turn strategy into action and bring deep domain expertise to guide decisions.
- Learning forums: Cross-team checkpoints to share progress, surface roadblocks, and pivot based on lived experience.
- Domain knowledge and tech translation forums: Points of alignment where scientific, tech translation and stakeholder perspectives meet, and direction can be challenged and calibrated.

Governance and operating rhythms of the APaIR biosecurity program

1. **Sprint planning** with 12-week incremental Agile Sprints
2. **Implementation and training** on JIRA project workflow management system
3. **Monitoring and reporting** of sprint objectives and deliverables around quarterly reporting cycles to the APaIR Biosecurity Steering Committee
4. **Continuous feedback** loops using surveys, workshop sessions
5. **Stop-go checkpoints** and pivot decision points
6. **Regular business health checks** with Business Development, IP and Commercialisation managers
7. **Coaching / mentoring model** with portfolio leader
8. **Weekly 15-min touchpoints** touch points meetings between project leads and portfolio leader
9. **Development of a product roadmap** that defies the goal (North Star) and major milestones. Target Product Profile (TPP) and Target Market Profile (TMP) informed the roadmap
10. **Continuous review** and refinement of project plans

Figure 9: Governance and Operating rhythms of the Biosecurity Program

In translation, leadership and governance are the scaffolding that holds momentum over years, not months. They keep teams aligned, challenged, and supported through the toughest stages.

8 Principles and practices of agile translation

Key principles that inform the frameworks design

The Agile Translation OS is grounded in a set of operating principles that guide how translation is practised. These principles help institutions move from static planning to dynamic learning, from abstract ambition to tested progress, and from siloed execution to integrated delivery.

These principles are not theoretical ideals; they are practical anchors drawn from implementation experience across two years of program delivery. When consistently applied, they reinforce the behaviours, rhythms, and decision-making patterns that accelerate translation.

Principle 1
Relevance over novelty
Translation begins with relevance. Teams must start with a clear understanding of who they are trying to help, why it matters, and how they will know if progress is meaningful. Novelty in science is valuable, but novelty without relevance leads to elegant solutions for problems for which no solution is wanted. It recognises that what you should do is a small subset of what you could do.

Principle 2
Evidence before belief
Translation requires a disciplined pursuit of evidence. Assumptions - about problems, users, systems, and pathways - must be tested early and often. Progress is measured not only by internal confidence, but by external testing.

Principle 3
Iteration beats perfection
Translation is not a one-shot exercise. It requires cycles of learning, adjustment, and re-engagement. Agile programs embrace iteration: short, sharp sprints that create momentum and generate directional insight.

Principle 4
Integration over isolation
Translation can't live on the edge. It must be integrated into the rhythms of research programs, business unit priorities, and leadership forums. Teams require scaffolding - forums, rituals, and decisions, to ensure their insights feed back into institutional strategy.

Principle 5
Responsiveness as a cultural norm
Translation is as much about culture as capability. Institutions must create permission structures where responsiveness, to new evidence, shifting contexts, or stakeholder needs, is not penalised, but expected and rewarded.

Principle 6
Problem first, capability second
Translation starts with a clear understanding of the problem and a solution that is wanted. Only once the team is confident in the need should capability be considered. Starting with capability is a trap, it narrows opportunities and risks missing the real problem that needs to be solved.

Principle 7
Domain expertise unlocks deeper insight
Domain experts take translation further by helping teams see patterns in what will and will not work. Their role is to challenge assumptions, add lived experience, and guide teams beyond activity toward sharper insight. Coaches and mentors with domain knowledge are critical to testing assumptions and keeping teams on track.

Principles set the foundation

Practices guide the translation process and checks keep it on track.

Practice 1: Assemble translation-ready teams

Core behaviours:

1. Is the team operating at the speed that customers need? Build teams with the right mix of skills, domain expertise, and perspectives.
2. Protect time commitment and focus for translation.
3. Make translation intent explicit and set expectations for pace and adaptability.

Diagnostic checks:

- Does the team have the right mix of skills and experience?
- Is domain expertise embedded or accessible?
- Has enough time and focus been allocated to the project?
- Does the team understand the translation intent?
- Is the team operating at the speed customers and stakeholders need?

Practice 2: Deepen problem understanding

Core behaviours:

1. Use structured processes to move beyond surface-level problem definitions.
2. Engage diverse stakeholders to uncover unmet needs and test assumptions.
3. Focus effort on problems that are real, important, and connected to user demand.

Diagnostic checks:

- Has the team engaged a diverse set of stakeholders?
- Can the team clearly distinguish between "must have" and "nice to have" needs?
- Has the problem been validated with customers or end-users?
- Are assumptions tested against evidence rather than belief?
- Is there clarity about why this problem is worth solving?

Practice 3: Decide under uncertainty, prioritise critical risks

Core behaviours:

1. Make decisions with incomplete information instead of waiting for certainty.
2. Prioritise the most critical risks ahead of secondary issues.
3. Use rhythms and forums to accelerate decision-making and reduce uncertainty step by step.

Diagnostic checks:

- Is the team able to make progress without perfect information?
  Are critical risks identified and prioritised ahead of less important ones?
- Do forums and rituals support faster decision-making under uncertainty?
- Are assumptions and risks revisited as new evidence emerges?

Practice 4: Engage sponsors and mentors

Core behaviours:

1. Secure active involvement of sponsors, mentors, and coaches.
2. Use them to challenge assumptions and provide accountability.
3. Leverage their domain expertise to strengthen direction and reinforce translation intent.

Diagnostic checks:

- Are sponsors actively engaged in translation forums and checkpoints?
- Do mentors bring domain expertise to guide decisions?
- Are sponsors and mentors holding teams accountable to evidence and progress?
- Is translation intent being reinforced through their involvement?

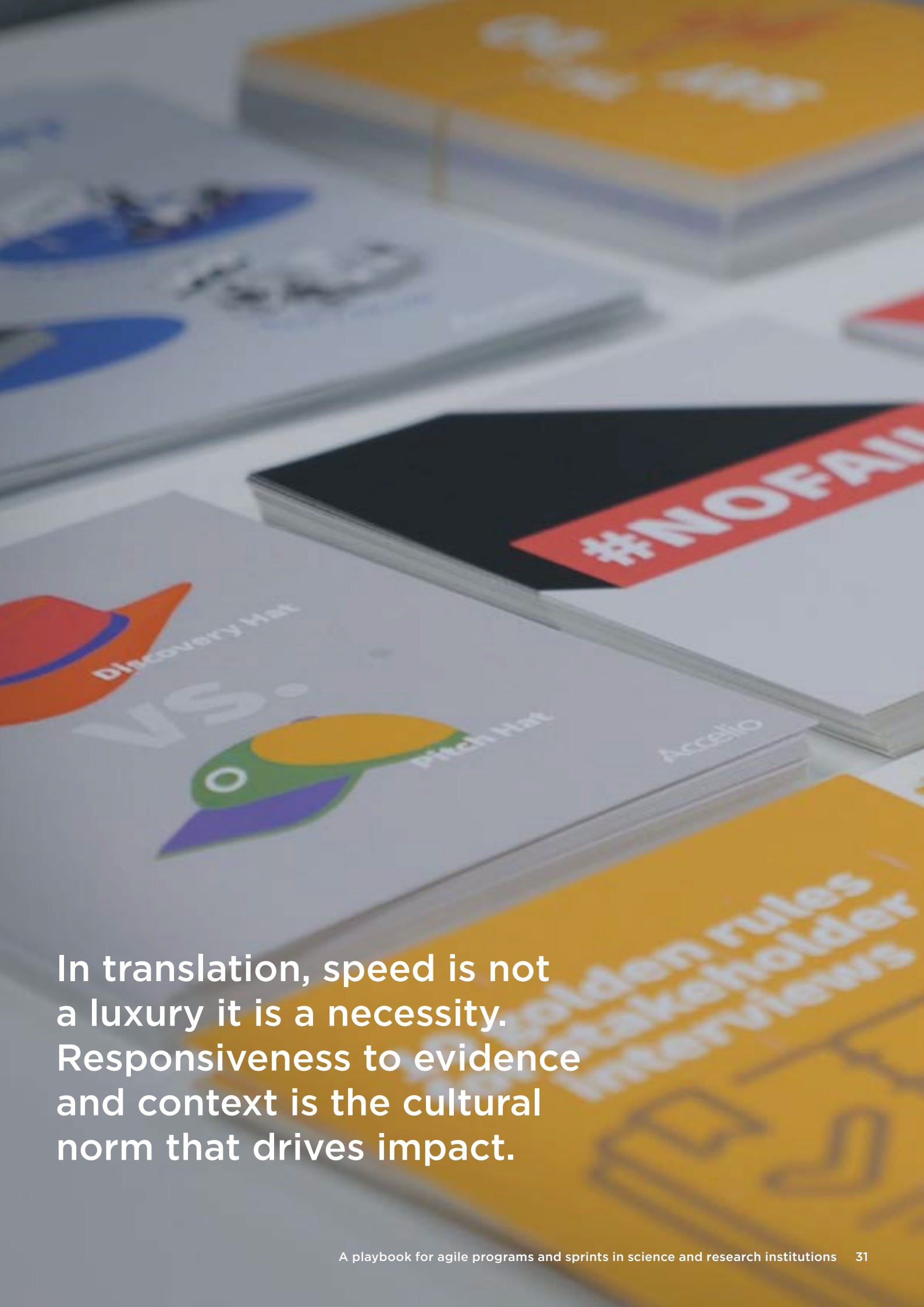
Practice 5: Embed translation into institutional rhythms

Core behaviours:

1. Connect team activity with program and institutional decision-making.
2. Establish forums, reporting rhythms, and leadership pathways for translation.
3. Make translation insights visible, shareable, and part of organisational strategy.

Diagnostic checks:

- Are translation forums linked to program or institutional decision-making?
- Do leadership priorities reflect insights from translation teams?
- Are reporting and cadence structures in place to keep translation visible?
- Is translation treated as part of the organisational fabric, not a side activity?



In translation, speed is not a luxury it is a necessity. Responsiveness to evidence and context is the cultural norm that drives impact.

9 Designing for translation: teams, programs, and conditions

Not all teams are created equal. Their mix of problem understanding, science capability, and translation experience shapes how far and how fast they can progress.

Translation is a team sport. A translation system is only as strong as the teams operating within it. While the Agile Translation OS provides the scaffolding, it is the composition of the team, not individual brilliance, that determines how far and how fast they can progress.

Through our work, we have identified three core levers that shape a team's ability to succeed in translation:

3 Core levers that shape team progress

1 Depth of problem understanding
How well the team can articulate the problem and test it with evidence.

2 Science capability
The strength, domain relevance, and credibility of the science brought to the problem space.

3 Translation experience
The degree of familiarity the team has with translation practices, customer engagement, and end-user pathways.

The Accelio Impact Sprint is the factory, but the inputs vary. Teams enter with different combinations of problem depth, capability, and experience. By understanding these inputs, leaders can set realistic expectations for how far a team is likely to progress and what support they will need, both in the Sprint, and the Agile Translation OS in which it is embedded.

Teams then cycle through an **evidence-driven translation loop.** Each time the team applies the approach to a problem, they deepen their understanding of the problem, sharpen how science is applied, and build translation experience.

Over time, this not only reduces uncertainty, it strengthens capability, and accelerates progress - it also sets the foundation for long-term acceleration.

As teams move through multiple Sprint cycles, their skills compound. What begins as a steep learning curve in the first Sprint, often experienced as an emotional shift from discovery-driven thinking to translation-driven practice, becomes a source of confidence and momentum in the second cycle.

Leaders who recognise and invest in this compounding effect enable their teams to accelerate faster over time, rather than treating each Sprint as a one-off event.

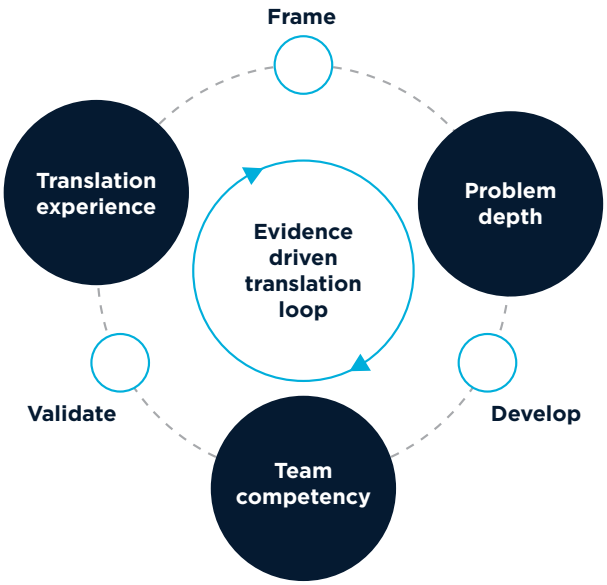


Figure 10: Evidence Driven Translation Loop. Inspired by Lean Startup Loop, Adopted Accelio Fast-Trac SLAM Teams© 2022 Accelio

Lever 1: Understanding problem depth

Stating a problem is easy. Understanding it in the real world context is hard.

Translation teams cut through theory to see how problems play out across systems, people and constraints, and frame them clearly enough for real solutions to be tested.

The first lever, Problem Depth, helps teams define the challenge they are truly solving. It assesses how well they understand the real-world context of the problem and the granularity of that understanding. Experience across multiple programs and sprints shows that teams must progress through five levels of problem granularity to reach clarity.

Our experience shows that the majority of teams enter translation efforts with unclear problem understanding and overly ambitious objectives. Some try to solve systemic problems without a clear mandate; others fixate on narrow outputs without considering broader relevance.

Assessing a team's understanding of problem granularity is often the single most important lever influencing their progress within a Sprint or program. It defines how fast and how far they can move. Problem granularity is like the starting position in a race: teams with a clear, evidence-based understanding of the problem begin in pole position, while those without it start at a disadvantage. They may all begin together, but they will not finish at the same place or reach the same depth of impact.

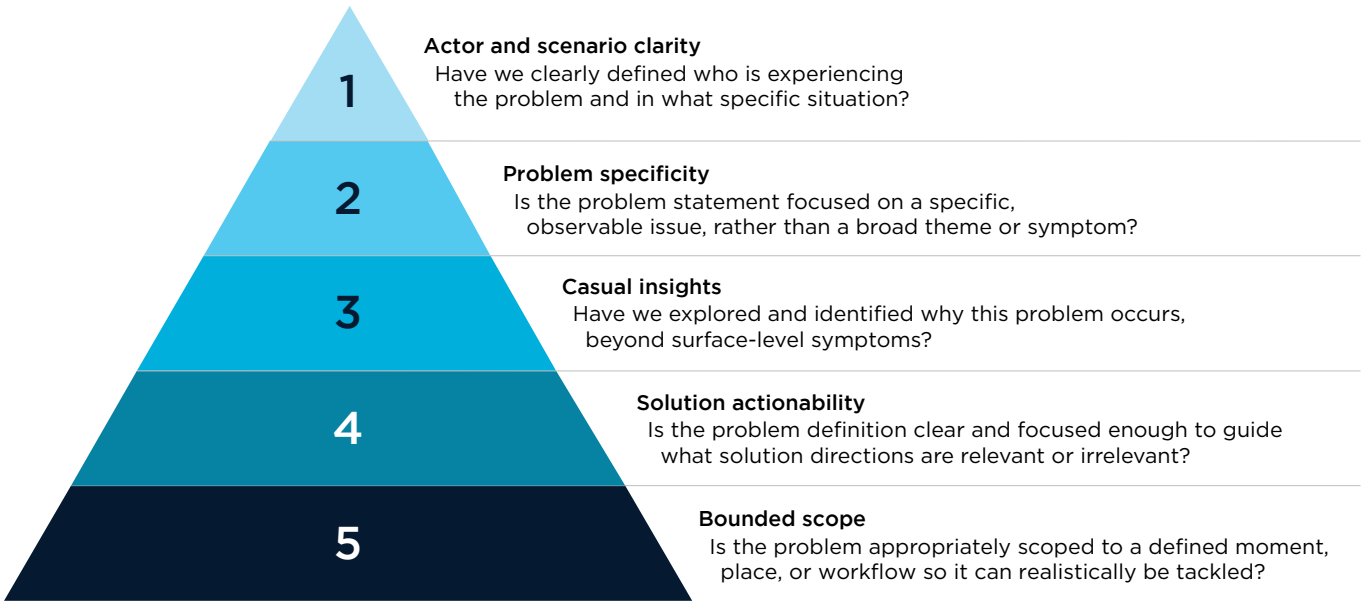


Figure 11: Problem Depth Pyramid - Adopted from the Accelio Fast-Trac Creative Problem Solving Framework © 2023

Lever 2: Translation experience

Translation experience isn't trained, it's earned.

Teams build translation capability through real-world cycles, not classroom learning. Each Sprint strengthens their reflexes, but mastery comes when these behaviours are reinforced within their program (operational home).

Research experience does not automatically create translation experience. Working in a translation-driven way demands a different set of behaviours, decisions and rhythms learned through doing, not instruction. Within the Agile Translation Framework, capability compounds as teams complete multiple Sprint cycles and apply learning within their operational home. Each iteration builds confidence, pace and coordination, embedding translation thinking into daily program delivery.

The 5 levels of translation experience maturity

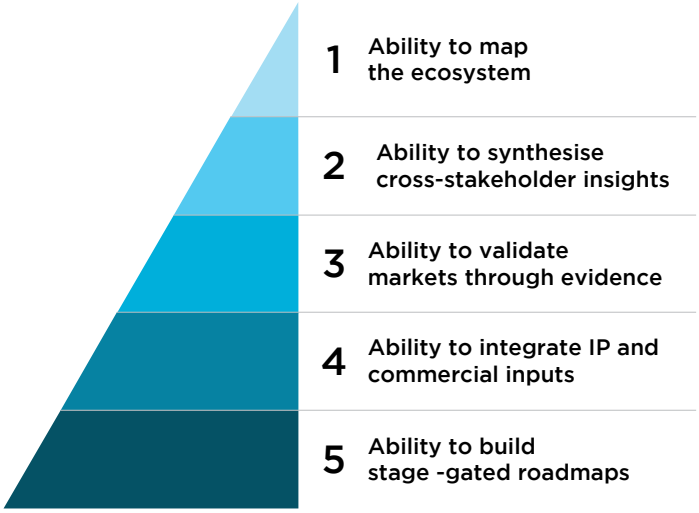


Figure 12: Translation Experience Pyramid - Adopted from Accelio Innovation Fast-Trac © 2023

Team example: Internal parasite diagnostic

A clear example came from the Internal Parasite Diagnostic (IPDx) team. Their first Sprint, focused on Lumpy Skin disease, exposed critical gaps in problem definition. This project stopped and pivoted to Johne's disease. In their second cycle, they applied those lessons to the IPDx opportunity and moved nearly three times faster than other teams, driven by deeper problem granularity and stronger translation experience.

Internal parasite Dx journey

1. **Lumpy skin disease**
   Initial focus revealed no clear unmet need
   Sprint 1
2. **Johne's disease**
   Pivot applied lessons in problem framing
   Sprint 1
3. **Internal parasites (sheep)**
   Reframed opportunity with stronger problem granularity
   Sprint 2
4. **On-Farm diagnostic for resistance**
   Validated solution, funded for $1M implementation
   Program

Most leaders think in programmatic terms, believing they are putting a team through a program. In practice, acceleration occurs when teams cycle through translation repeatedly and the operational home sustains the rhythm. Translation experience is not a credential; it is a muscle strengthened through use and reinforced by the structures and forums of the operational home.

Lever 3: Science capability

Agile translation helps teams make deliberate choices about how their science creates impact, not just where it fits.

It focuses on how science is used, the problems it solves, and what to let go of.

Teams already bring valuable scientific capability. The goal is not to find a place for the science, but to decide how best to apply it to create impact. Science capability sits on a continuum. It shapes what teams contribute but does not define what problems they can solve.

Science capability continuum

Foundational science
Core research excellence that builds new knowledge or discovery without immediate application

▼

Domain expertise
Deep understanding of a specific field and its challenges, enabling targeted problem-solving

▼

Multi domain capability
Ability to integrate insights and methods across multiple disciplines to address complex problems

▼

Platform capability
Reusable technology, data, or infrastructure that can be applied to diverse problems or markets

▼

Enabling system capability
Cross-cutting frameworks or tools that connect domains, scale impact, and support system-level change

Some teams begin with deep domain expertise; others bring enabling platforms or cross-disciplinary capability. The continuum is not exhaustive; it simply recognises that different starting points carry different strengths, constraints and degrees of flexibility.

Classical assessments like TRL or IRL are not enough and can trap teams into forcing their science to fit a use case. They miss the nuances of translation, the problem being solved, and the team dynamics that shape impact.

The three levers of Agile Translation shift the focus from capability to unmet need, providing a more realistic picture of what can be achieved within a Sprint or program. Across these variations, six common team archetypes have emerged.

Across these variations, six translation archetypes have emerged:

A - Domain masters
Deep expertise in a defined field, applying proven science and tech translation knowledge to targeted problems.

B - Full-Stack capability

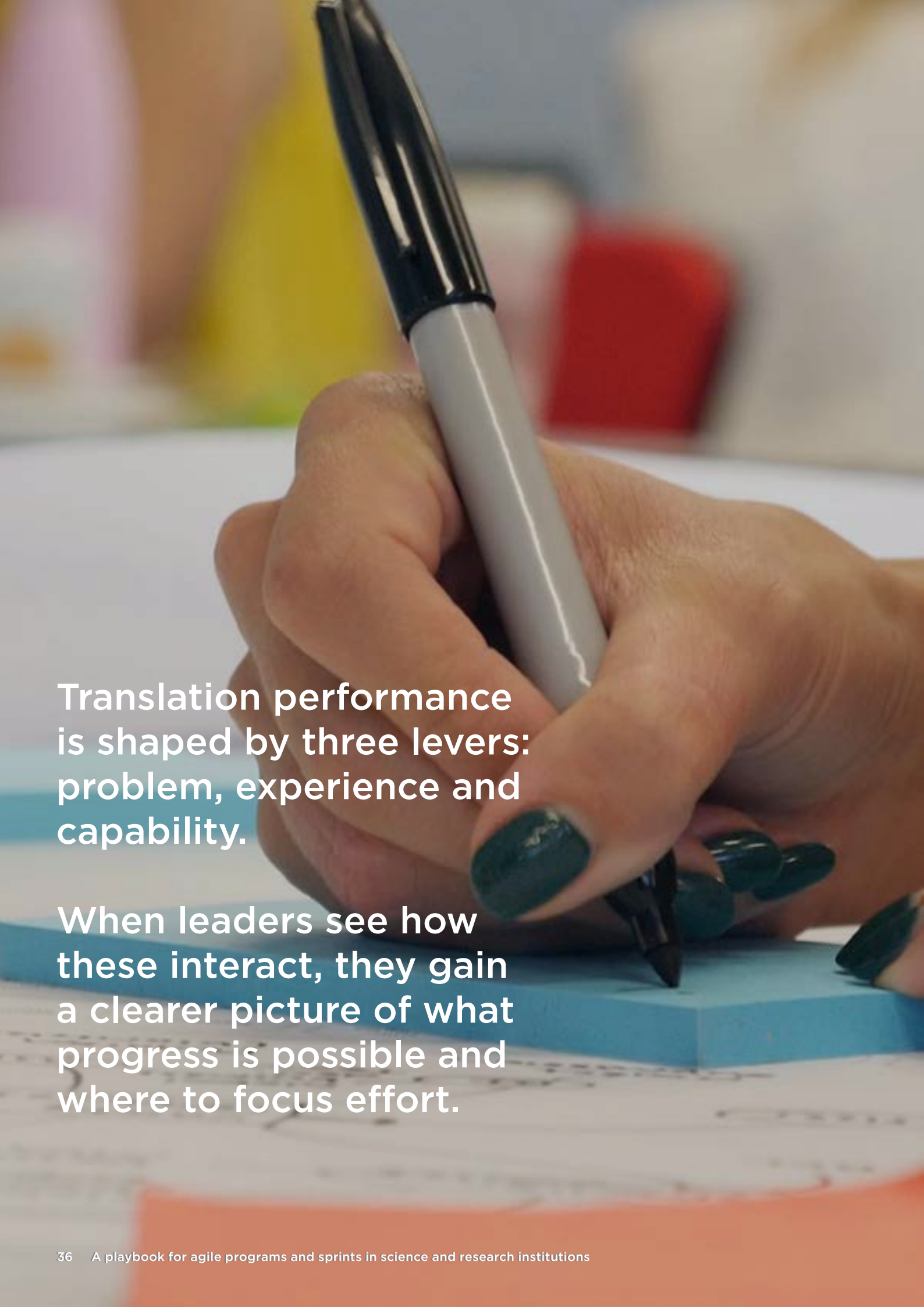
Science, assets and skills already in place; ready to execute once focus and direction are clear.

C - Platform technology builder
Owns a versatile technology or data platform and is exploring new applications or markets.

D - Domain explorers
Strong domain knowledge and networks but still defining the specific problem or application to pursue.

E - Capability stackers
Long-horizon teams building capability in stages to unlock major science or system-level change.

E - Early explorers
Individuals with mixed skills working together for the first time to define the problem focus.



Translation performance is shaped by three levers: problem, experience and capability.

When leaders see how these interact, they gain a clearer picture of what progress is possible and where to focus effort.

10 Learnings, achievements and outcomes from the H&B program

We know moving from theory to practice is messy, we designed the Agile Translation Operating System and ran it end to end in Health and Biosecurity over two years. During this time we ran three Sprints which were embedded within the agile process.

We applied, tested and refined the approach with real teams, external stakeholders and senior leaders. Short evidence cycles, clear gates and protected time guided decisions and kept momentum.

This section shows what we did, what we learned and what we changed, so senior leaders can see what is possible in their context.

Key achievements:

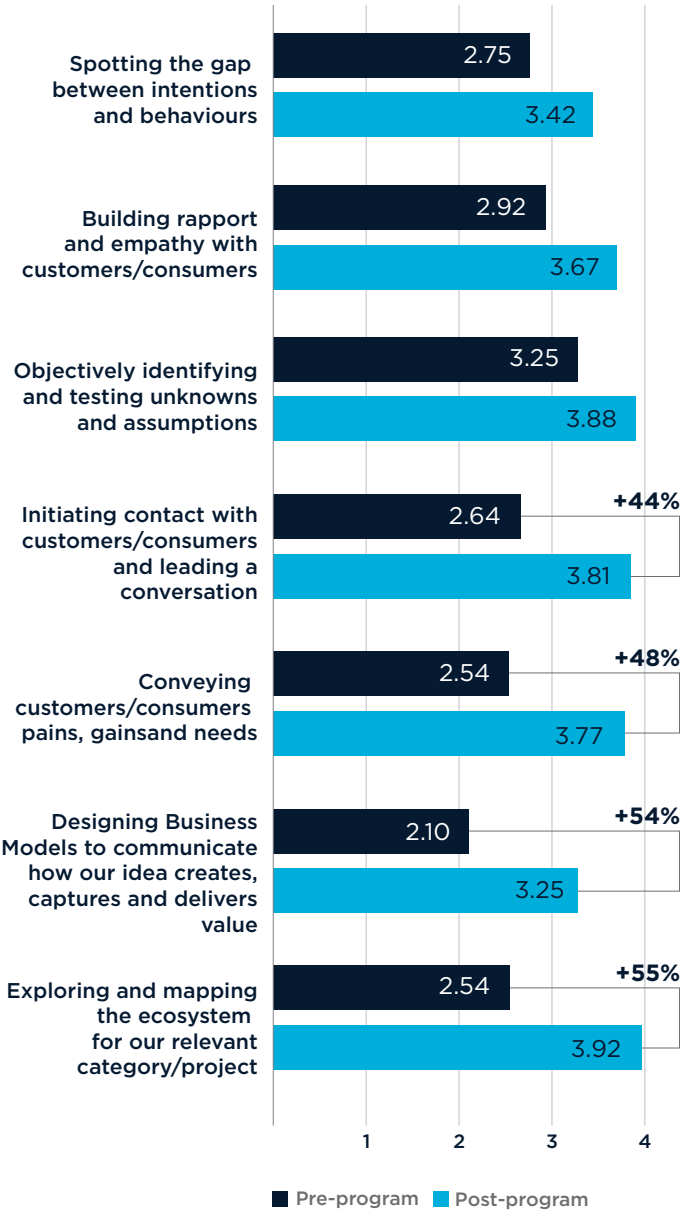
1 | Evidence and decision velocity
153 conversations, 84 tests, 3 decisive calls

Agile Translation changes the definition of progress. We track leading indicators: external engagement, insights gathered, assumptions tested and deci sions made. Across three Sprint intakes, teams achieved: 153 customer and stakeholder conversations, 84 critical assumptions explored and tested, and 3 data-driven go or pivot or stop decisions.

511	Customer conversations conducted
301	Assumptions explored and tested
8	Key decisions made

2 | Translation mindset and skills uplift
Seven core skills lifted, peaks of +71%

We built skills, knowledge and mindset inside the Sprint and reinforce them across the Operational Home (Program). Pre- and post-assessments across seven core areas show clear uplift, with the largest gains in: initiating contact (+42%), conveying customer pains and jobs (+62%), designing business models (+71%), and mapping the ecosystem (+70%).



3 | Stronger teams, better ways of working

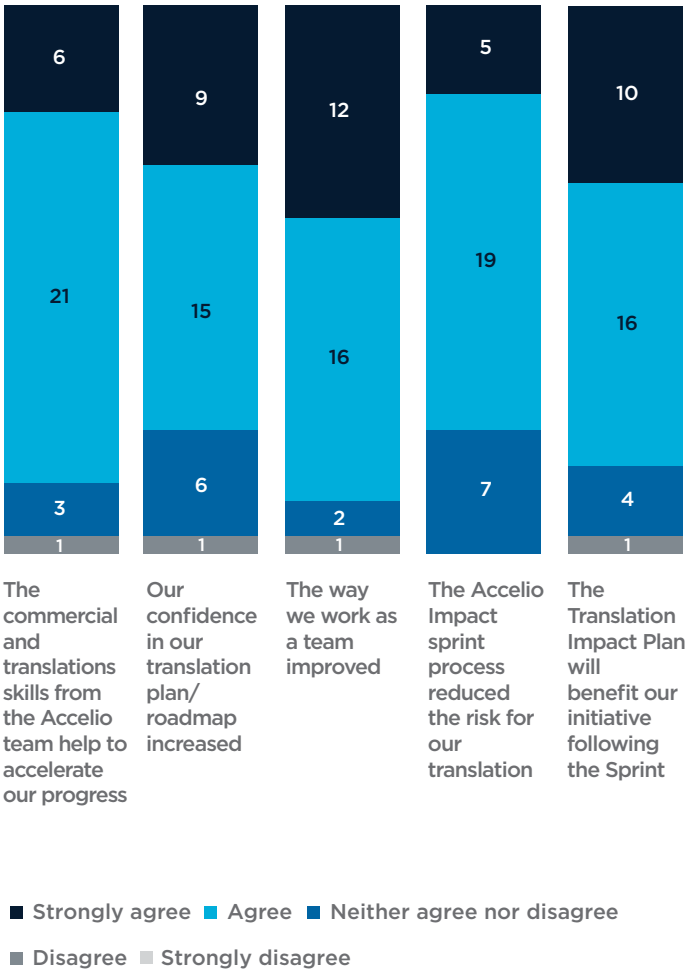
90% faster progress, 85% clearer roadmaps

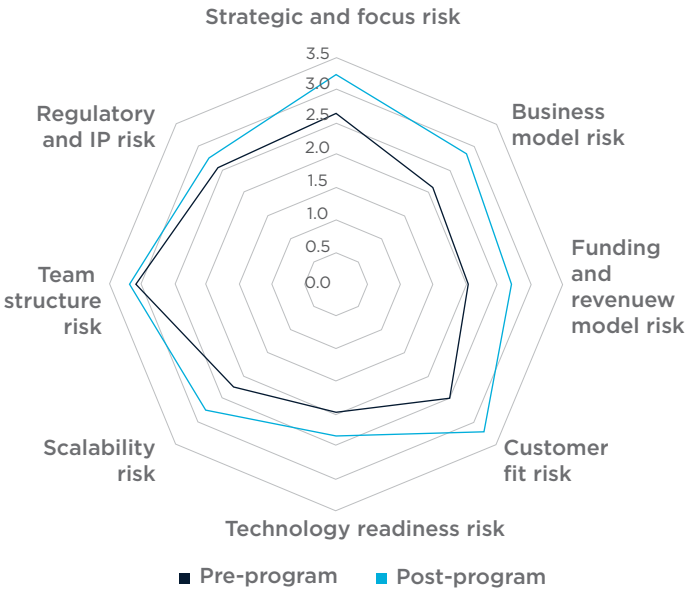
Translation is a team sport. We organise around teams, protect scarce time and coach what great looks like. Participants reported stronger collaboration and confidence in their roadmap, with large majorities agreeing the Sprint accelerated progress and that they will reuse the methods. Use the team performance bar chart.

4 | Clearer risks, greater confidence

Sharper focus on Strategy, Funding, Customer Fit and Model

Teams learned a practical approach to identify, prioritise and address translation risks. Confidence increased across all eight risk domains, with the highest priority areas being Strategy and Focus, Funding and Revenue, Customer Fit and Business Model.





Overall agile translation operating system learnings

Team composition strategy

Team makeup needs to align with translation roles (science, tech, project and product management, business development, customer engagement, etc.).

Learning: Identify and assign roles early and protect time so the translation team can run at pace.

Coaching and mentorship

Domain-relevant coaching and mentorship increases accountability and successful project delivery.

Learning: Scheduled regular check ins with domain mentors to enable rapid problem solving and progression.

Customer-centric mindset

Focus on understanding customer needs and end-user insights.

Learning: Start from unmet needs and test with stakeholders beyond existing networks.

Innovation upskilling

Upskilling in innovation and entrepreneurship through regular webinars with those with lived experience.

Learning: Exposure to real world hands-on experience in taking ideas through to real-world use helps reinforce learnings and behaviours.

Agile culture shift

Support teams to swiftly adjust direction and flexibly modify workflows in response to emerging information and evolving circumstances.

Learning: Time-bound Go/No-Go decisions and permission to stop normalise iteration and protect momentum.

Operational health checks

Regular Commercialisation, IP and BD health checks enable the early capture of issues likely to affect translation.

Learning: Early IP/FTO, Commercialisation and BD checks surface blockers before scale decisions.

Milestone checkpoints

Measurable Go/No-Go checkpoints were essential for monitoring progress and continuation of research.

Learning: Put gates in the calendar with criteria and hold them; use evidence reviews to build portfolio memory.

Budget replanning

Regular budget and capability replanning was useful in streamlining project costs and FTE allocations.

Learning: Regular and frequent budget and FTE allocation reviews against stage gates ensures more effective and flexible use of resources.

Commercial partnerships

Early engagement with potential commercial partners helps to refine the product and build value.

Learning: Early partner engagement helps to clarify the pathway and the solution.

Agile translation operating system outcomes

Over two years and three iterations we took Agile Translation from design to lived practice in Health and Biosecurity. The program delivered both hard and soft outcomes:

Return on investment

By 30 June 2025, the Health and Biosecurity program delivered a 1.66x ROI (Return of Investment), exceeding the 1.2x goal. External funding came from government and RDC grants, with no non-government investment. The priority for the next phase is to make more opportunities investment-ready for non-government capital.

Sprint acceleration multiplier

Teams reported meaningful time compression. The Sprint accelerated initiatives by 3–6 months for most participants, and nearly half said they achieved their ideal goal within the 90-day Sprint. In practical terms, that is roughly a 2–4x acceleration compared to their baseline pace

Team exemplar: Internal parasite Dx

The team entered Impact Sprint 1.0 focused on Lumpy Skin disease and invalidated the initial problem. Stakeholder discovery revealed diagnostics for sheep parasites as a stronger opportunity. In Impact Sprint 2.0 the team mapped the end-to-end translation pathway and secured about $1.0m in project funding.

Beyond the financial outcome, the team became a strong role model and cultural reinforcement for the Operational Home Unit.

Click ‘play’ to see Internal Parasite Dx Experience Testimonial Video

First 90 days: what changed quickly

Early momentum matters. In the first 90 days we saw tangible shifts in focus, behaviour and resource allocation.

Decisions and focus

- Three out of eight teams discovered they were building something the external market did not want.
- Three out of eight teams pivoted to nearer-term opportunities in their roadmap, reducing funding and market risk.
- One team chose to close its project based on direct Sprint insights.

Adoption and culture

More than half of the teams moved from resistance to active adoption of translation skills, mindsets and methods.

Past Sprint alumni joined new teams as mentors, transferring learnings and reinforcing norms.

Direct customer engagement and assumption testing became standard practice across Health and Biosecurity.

Resource and leadership

- Seven out of eight teams restructured resources, saving about $1.5m that was reallocated to higher-fit work.
- Two teams changed lead scientists to maintain focus on the unmet need.

Market and partnerships

- Two teams progressed investor or partnership discussions with two CA agreements signed with new customers.
- Two teams identified greater potential in platform development rather than single product development.

CASE STUDY

Internal parasite Dx

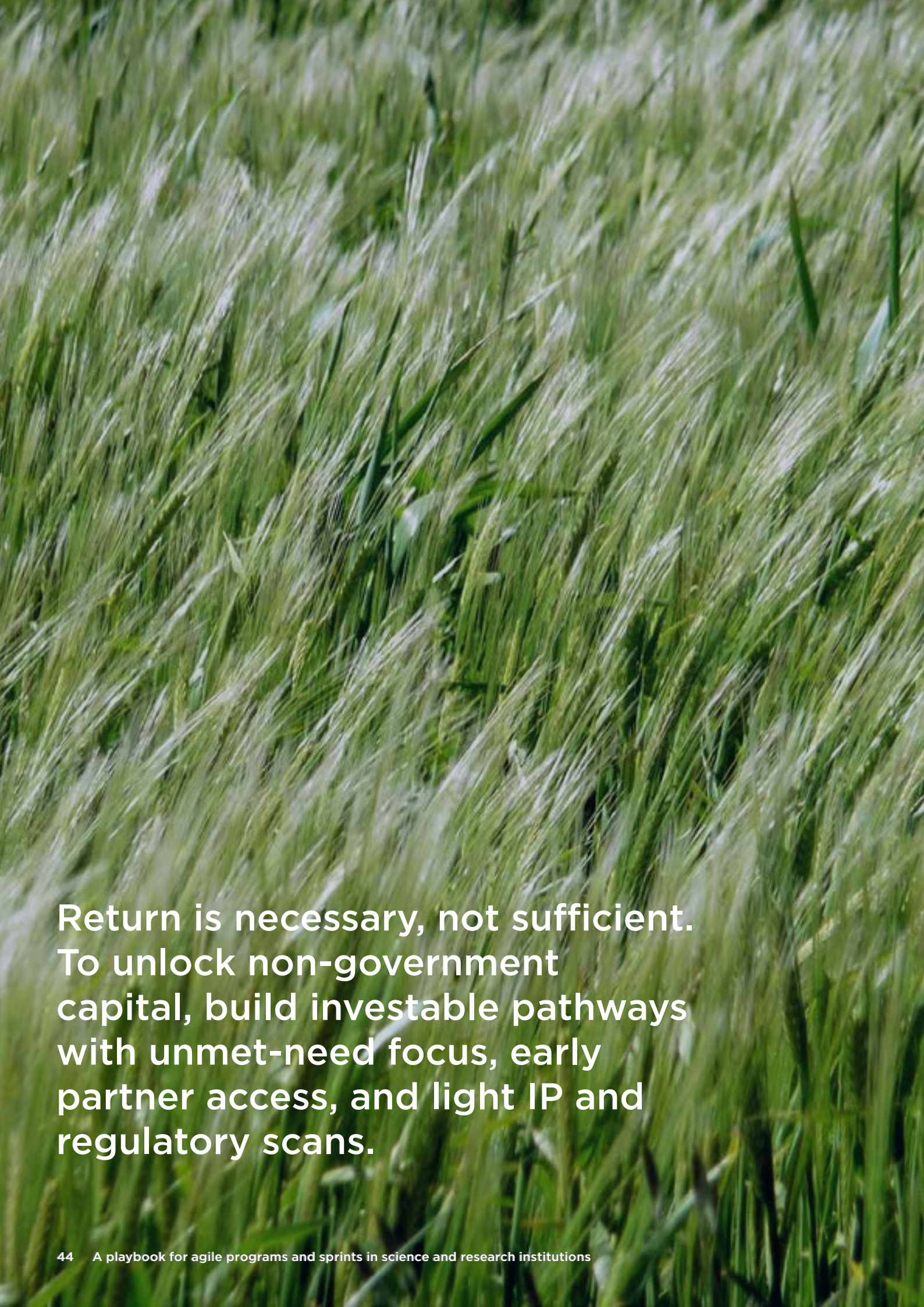
From problem clarity to $1 million in funding

The Internal Parasite Diagnostic (IPDx) team's journey illustrates how clarity of problem and translation intent drive momentum. Their first Sprint, focused on Lumpy Skin disease, revealed that the team had not yet identified a clear unmet need. Rather than continue, they paused and pivoted to Johne's disease, applying those lessons in a second cycle that focused on internal parasite diagnostics for sheep.

Internal parasites are a major issue in Australia's sheep industry, causing both welfare concerns and significant economic losses. During the Accelio Impact Sprint, the team mapped the broader ecosystem and spoke with more than forty stakeholders across the value chain from producers and veterinarians to industry and policy groups. Through these conversations, they identified a shared demand for a simple, on-farm diagnostic tool that could help farmers detect resistant parasites and make faster, more informed management decisions.

By deepening their understanding of the problem and how adoption would need to occur across different stakeholder groups, the team refined their approach and developed a clear translation pathway. When a major funding body asked who would help deliver the technology on-farm, the team could demonstrate the full impact pathway from science to use. IPDx was subsequently awarded approximately $1 million in project funding, positioning the technology for real-world adoption and scale.

Through this process, the team shifted from fitting a solution to a problem to designing the right solution for a clearly defined need, demonstrating translation intent in action.



Return is necessary, not sufficient. To unlock non-government capital, build investable pathways with unmet-need focus, early partner access, and light IP and regulatory scans.

11 Agile translation key success factors

After more than two years of hands-on implementation across the APaIR Biosecurity Program, a set of recurring success factors began to surface.

These are not theoretical principles. They are grounded lessons drawn directly from the lived experience of teams, leaders and programs who navigated the realities of translating science at scale.

Each success factor represents a critical consideration that can either accelerate or inhibit progress. They are practical design insights for anyone looking to apply Agile Translation in context.

How to read success factors
Each success factor includes three parts:

Success factor (SF)
A core insight that emerged repeatedly through implementation.

✓ **Do this**
What effective application looks like

in practice.

x **Don't do this**
What tends to go wrong when this factor is missed, delayed or misunderstood.

These are not rules, but reflections of what consistently shaped outcomes.

Applied well, they help Agile Translation gain traction and when overlooked, they often explain why progress stalls.

SF: Programs must be designed to hold both delivery and discovery

Agile Translation only works when programs are explicitly structured to support both delivery and early-stage exploration. Without room for discovery, translation struggles to take root.

✓ **Do this:** Successful programs bake in time, permission, and rhythm for teams to explore real-world problems through the eyes of their customers and end-users before undertaking the physical research in the lab. Translation isn't an afterthought.

x **Don't do this:** Programs focused only on delivery milestones shut down exploration. Teams feel locked into fixed plans, unable to test, pivot, or engage meaningfully with stakeholders. Translation becomes performative, not practical.

SF: Learning is emotional. Build mentorship and community around it

Translation work is emotionally demanding. It asks scientists to learn in new ways, face uncertainty and work through ambiguity. Progress depends as much on support and reflection as it does on tools and process.

✓ **Do this:** Create mentoring and peer communities that help teams process discomfort, share lessons and normalise the uncertainty that comes with translation. Build confidence through reflection, not just delivery.

x **Don't do this:** Rely only on tools or templates without considering how people experience the work. Leaving teams to navigate ambiguity alone leads to fatigue, disengagement and box-ticking instead of genuine learning.

SF: Translation requires active leadership with a vested interest in the outcome

Translation succeeds when leaders are visibly engaged and invested. It is a human exercise that demands presence, curiosity and a willingness to work through the grey with teams.

✓ **Do this:** Leaders should be present, ask questions and coach teams to think bigger and take smart risks. Stay close to the work, model engagement and show a genuine interest in the translation outcome.

x **Don't do this:** Don't overly delegate or over-engineer processes. Stepping back creates distance and signals that translation is someone else's job. Teams need to feel challenged but supported, knowing their leaders are in it with them.

SF: Culture is a byproduct of expectations, cadence and reinforcement

Translation culture is not declared; it is built through consistent direction and rhythm. Clear expectations and regular reinforcement shape what teams value and how they work.

✓ **Do this:** Set a steady rhythm of engagement. Use short weekly check-ins, monthly all-team sessions, BD and commercialisation health checks, quarterly evidence reviews and regular updates with steering committees. Keep these rhythms consistent for the life of the project.

x **Don't do this:** Avoid one-off skill-building activities or leaving existing structures unchanged. Translation cannot thrive in a discovery-driven environment.

SF: Translation requires cross-disciplinary teams with the right expertise and support

Translation progress depends on the combined capability of the team, not the strength of a single discipline. Teams built for translation bring rounded expertise, curiosity and leadership, supported by the right mix of external specialists.

✓ **Do this:** Form teams with balanced capability and complementary support. Combine scientific expertise with business development, market discovery, IP, product management and stakeholder engagement. Involve these experts early to shape direction, not just to review outcomes.

x **Don't do this:** Avoid building teams solely around the lead researcher or strongest scientific discipline. Translation stalls when individuals work in isolation, focus on their own expertise or lack shared leadership.

Translation is not a side project. It's an organisational discipline built through design, leadership and daily practice.

12 Implementation roadmap and fit-for-translation assessment

Most leaders don't start with a blank slate. That's why translation needs careful design.

Adopting the Agile Translation Framework is rarely a greenfield exercise. Most leaders are working within existing teams, programs, and pressures. That's why success depends on thoughtful sequencing, not just ambition.

Based on the work with CSIRO and Accelio's broader experience across large-scale innovation and business building programs, we've seen that effective implementation requires two things:

1. A clear roadmap for how to transition to an agile translation model.
2. A shared view of Agile Translation Readiness- what's already in place, and what still needs to be built.

This gives organisations space to learn, adapt and build the right structures around their unique context.

The Agile Translation Roadmap on the right provides a reference point for this journey, from initial pilots through to full institutional adoption.

The same principles apply to how leaders resource and support agile translation. Start with enough investment and commitment to test your translation intent. Then increase both as you learn what works, before scaling across the broader organisation.

Implementation roadmap: from pilot to portfolio

We've observed that institutions succeed when they treat translation implementation not as a single program, but as a portfolio of learning.

The roadmap unfolds in three phases:

Phase 1: Pilot and test

- Identify 3 - 4 teams with leadership support and a translation-relevant problem.
- Run initial Accelio Impact Sprints to test translation approach, gather evidence, and model new ways of working.
- Establish and implement broader program structures and processes to support the sprints.
- Use these pilots to establish proof points, reveal systemic barriers, and engage leadership in live feedback loops.

Phase 2: Embed and align

- Scale to 5 - 6 teams under a shared program architecture with common rhythms, leadership touchpoints, and reflection forums.
- Introduce shared artefacts (translation canvases, sprint progress reviews, leadership debriefs) to drive institutional consistency.
- Begin to align funding, metrics, and forums with translation intent, reinforcing principles over performance alone.

Phase 3: Institutionalise and scale

- Expand the model to become the default operating system for new research programs and cross-unit initiatives.
- Introduce annual rhythm of planning, sprinting, and review across entire business units or divisions.
- Embed the Fit-for-Translation model into program design, capability planning, and executive reporting.

13 Fit-for-translation assessment

Agile Translation is an operating system, not a one-off project. The framework sets out six core building blocks that every organisation must adopt in its own context. No two organisations are the same, which is why readiness matters.

A short assessment helps leaders tailor the model to their environment, test appetite for change, and make the deliberate commitments required to succeed. Embarking on an Agile Translation journey involves tough choices about priorities, resources, and decision speed, and those choices should be made consciously.

The six building blocks

Use the six building blocks to check your fit for Agile Translation in your context.

Strategy

What it is: Anchor the work in a clear translation intent that defines who benefits, what problem is being solved, and why now. Position it within current strategic priorities and timing so leaders can choose, sequence, or stop with confidence.

Leadership

What it is: Name a senior sponsor who owns the outcome and shows up with time and authority. Make decision rights explicit and set a time bound path for go, pivot, or stop so momentum is protected.

Structure

What it is: Provide a stable program home that holds the work across cycles. Establish governance, budget guardrails, and forums that align priorities, manage risk, and keep continuity and documentation in one place.

Process

What it is: Run short evidence cycles that test the riskiest assumptions with external stakeholders. Put gates with clear criteria on the calendar and use those gates as real decision points.

Metrics

What it is: Define success and required progress thresholds up front and connect them to portfolio visibility. Reward learning, adoption risk reduction, and value creation so evidence triggers stop, pivot, or scale.

People

What it is: Staff a balanced team across science, stakeholder or market engagement, BD or commercial or IP, and delivery or product management. Protect time for 8 to 12 weeks so the team can run at the speed external stakeholders expect.

Building Block	What it is (micro)	Readiness statement (rate 1–7)	1 Not at all true	2 Rarely True	3 Somewhat True	4 Partly In Place	5 Mostly True	6 Consistently True	7 Role Model
	Translation intent, who benefits, why now; fit to portfolio and timing	We have an explicit translation intent validated with external market evidence and clear alignment to strategic priorities and timing.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Named senior sponsor, authority, time-bound decisions	We have a senior sponsor with authority and a clear, time bound path for go, pivot or stop decisions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Program home, governance, budget guardrails, forums	We have a program home with governance, budget and forums that can hold and resource the work beyond a single cycle.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Short evidence cycles; calendar gates used for decisions	We run short evidence cycles with defined gates and we use those gates to make timely decisions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Success and kill thresholds; portfolio visibility; evidence moves money	Our criteria and portfolio measures trigger stop, pivot or scale decisions and are visible to leaders.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Cross-functional roles named; protected 8–12 weeks; mentor covers gaps	We have the right roles named and protected time to run for 8 to 12 weeks at the speed stakeholders expect.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Final reflections

Institutions don't need to start from scratch. The frameworks and lessons in this playbook are grounded in real delivery within complex, science-driven environments. They offer a practical foundation to build systems that turn research into impact, not as one-off success stories, but as repeatable, scalable capability.

Adopting the Agile Translation Operating System is more than a strategy shift. It is a commitment to lead differently, to design structure, rhythm and reinforcement into how teams work. It asks leaders to create the conditions for progress, not just demand impact.

The reward is an institutional capability that no longer relies on individual champions. Instead, translation becomes embedded in the organisation's DNA, a system that continues to learn, adapt and deliver impact long after the first program ends.

None of this is easy. But it starts with you, the leader who sees an opportunity for change and has the courage and conviction to begin.

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