



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY



Research Impact Assessment Framework

Faculty and Medicine and Health
University of Sydney
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Research Impact Assessment Framework (RIAF)

Faculty of Medicine and Health
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006 Australia

For enquiries about the RIAF, please contact:

Kirsten Jackson, Research Impact Manager, or submit a [partnership enquiry form](#).

The Research Impact Assessment Framework has been developed by the University of Sydney, in collaboration with Deloitte and NSW Health.

The team would like to thank all the organisations involved in the pilot of the RIAF; Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District, Sydney Local Health District, Northern Sydney Local Health District, Centenary Institute, and The Sydney Children's Hospital Network.

In today's competitive world, research and innovation are essential for economic growth and progress. However, with limited resources it is crucial to make informed decisions about where to invest in Research.

The Research Impact Assessment Framework (RIAF) is a novel, robust framework and systematic process for demonstrating the high quality and impact to the government and the community of health and medicine research (HMR), enabling users to identify the most promising research projects and maximise the return on investment.

If fully implemented, the RIAF can support organisations to make well-informed decisions about future investments in HMR based on a comprehensive, independent assessment of research impact against strategic priorities, providing national leadership in the crucial area of public policy.

The framework aims to enable decision-makers to enhance the impact of HMR funding by:

- Increasing transparency and visibility to maximise value creation
- Identifying capability gaps in the ecosystem informing investment decisions that accelerate translation
- Benchmarking against best practices to drive quality improvement, and
- Guiding the funding of targeted initiatives that align with strategic priorities and equitably build the collective capability of the HMR ecosystem so that it can generate long-term, sustainable value-based research.

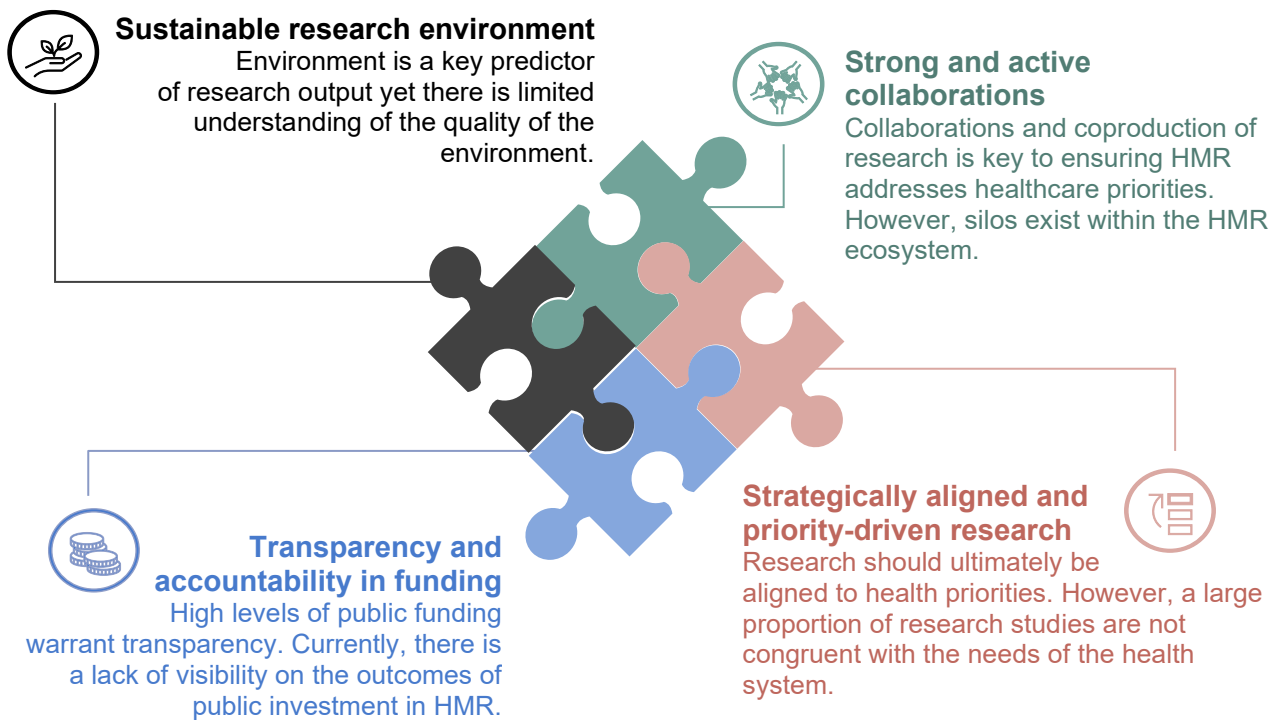
Achieving success ensures positive outcomes for all in the NSW health ecosystem:

- HMR will be aligned to the strategic needs of the health system
- NSW-based HMR researchers will be supported in research environments that enable world-leading research outputs and translation
- There will be an increased return on investment generated through NSW HMR
- Adoption of sophisticated tools will minimise the burden of the assessment exercise
- NSW will be seen as a national leader in the research assessment and implementation of HMR into policy and practice, and
- Patients will benefit from improved experiences and health outcomes informed by quality implementation of research into the health system.



Measuring impact is critical for building a successful health and medical research ecosystem.

Components of an impactful health and medical research (HMR) ecosystem:



An impactful HMR ecosystem has the potential to:

Impact measurement



Generate **value-based** HMR



Produce **world-leading** research outputs and organisations

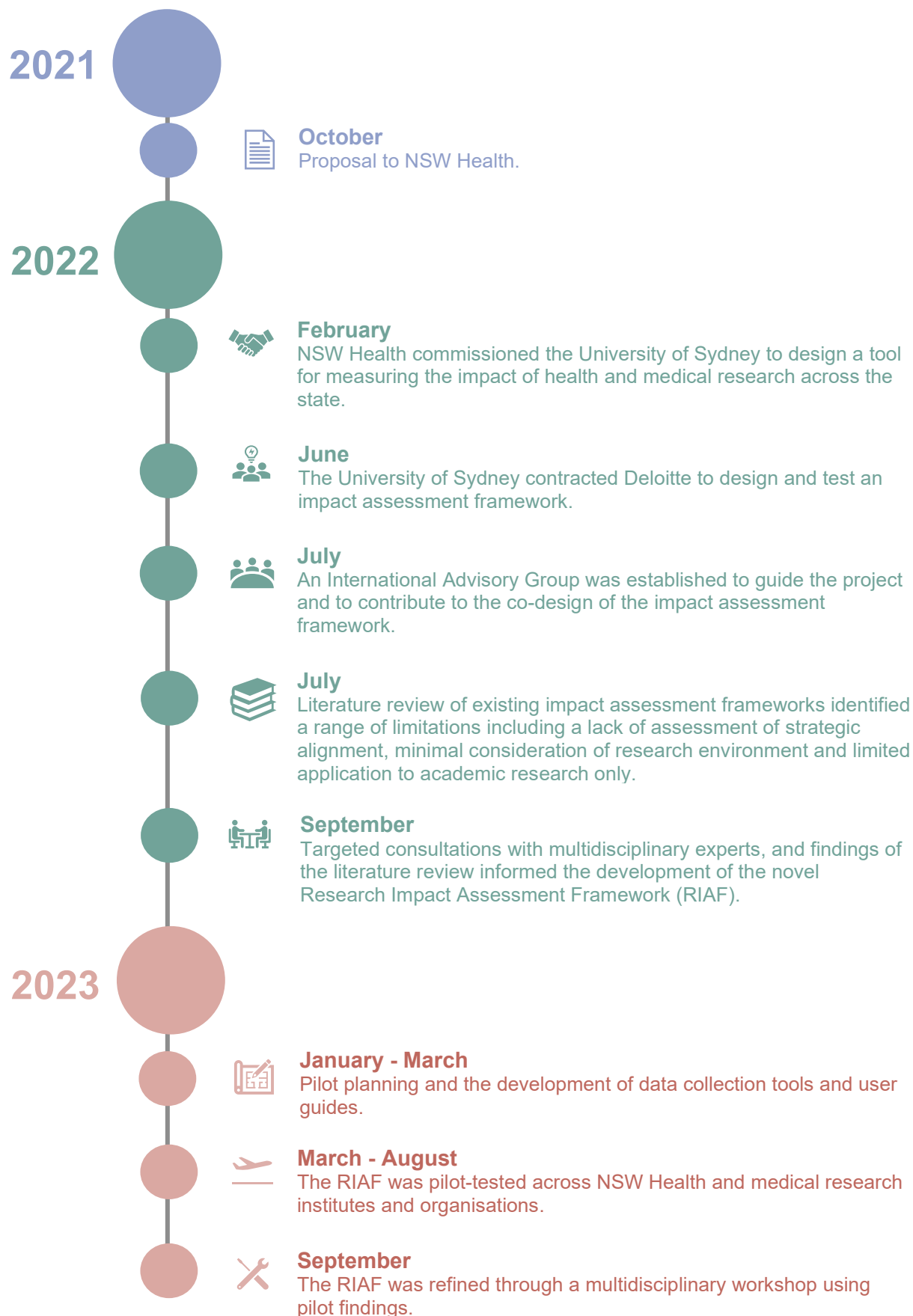


Improve **patient experiences** and **health outcomes**



Increase **Return on Investment (ROI)** generated through HMR

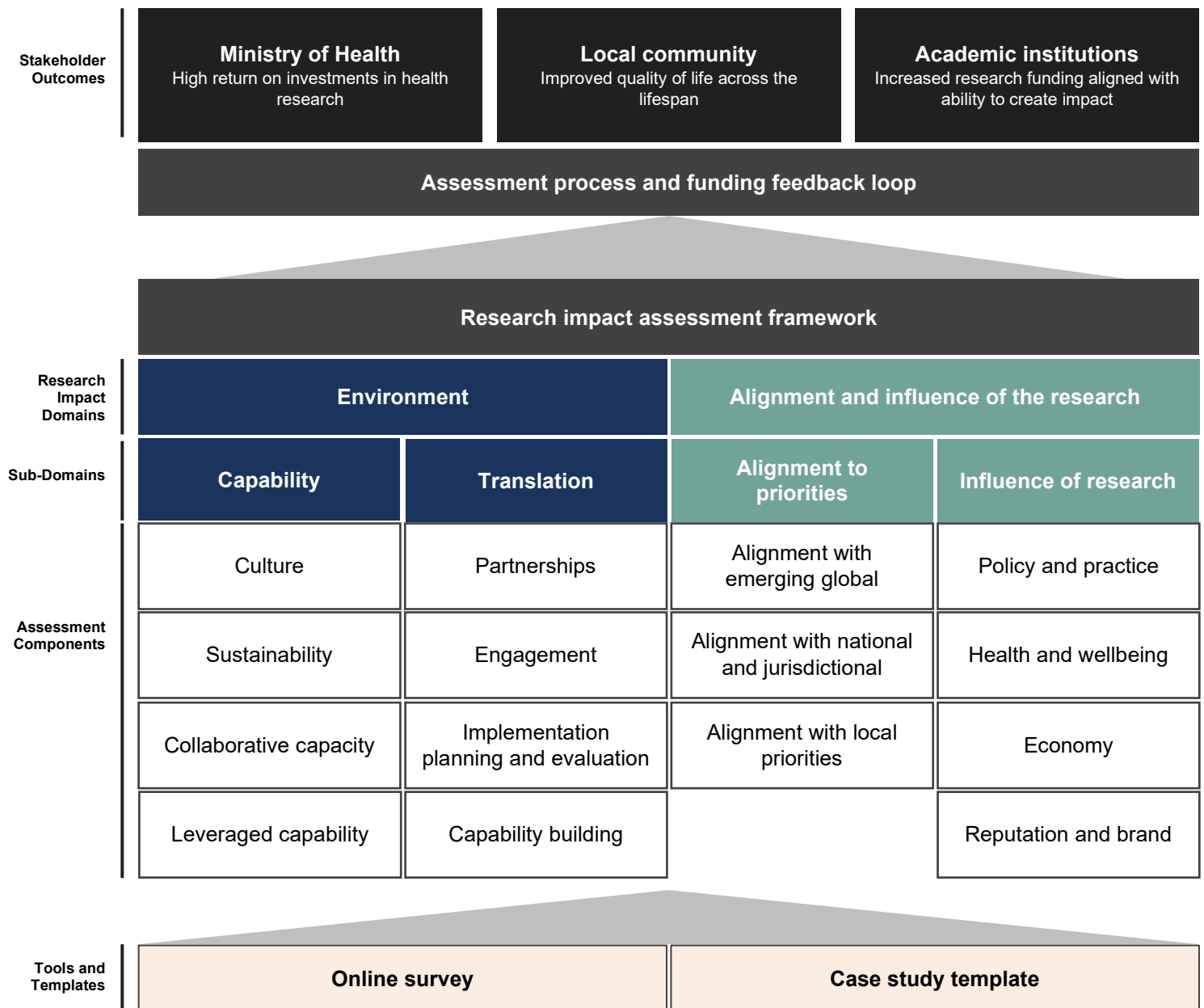
The Research Impact Assessment Framework was developed through literature review and stakeholder input.



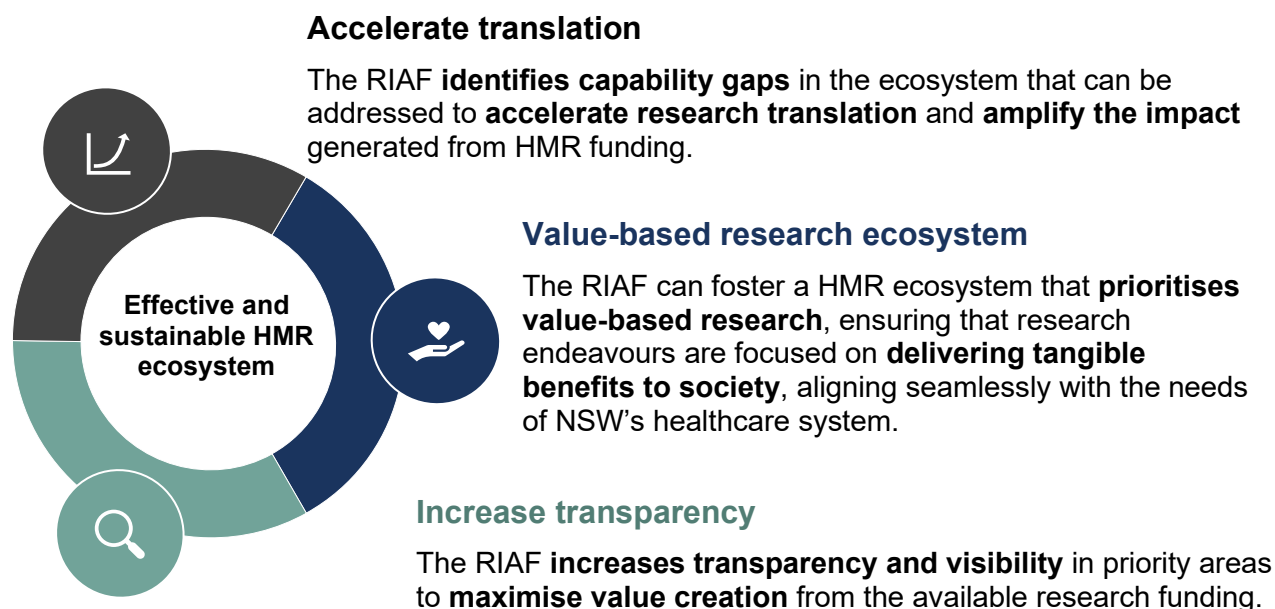
The RIAF was developed to measure the environment, alignment, and influence of research.

Unlike traditional impact assessment frameworks, the RIAF focuses on:

- ✓ Capturing the **broader impacts** of HMR on society and the economy beyond the scientific community
- ✓ The **Alignment** of research with state and national strategic priorities
- ✓ The **Environment** that fosters impactful research and innovation
- ✓ Assessing research conducted in **non-traditional settings**, such as health services.



The RIAF aims to enable research funders to accelerate research translation and enhance the impact of HMR funding.



There are four ways that the RIAF can be used.

1

Increase transparency and visibility

The RIAF **case studies measure and communicate** the impacts generated from HMR investment. Publicly available case studies can encourage research organisations to **maximise value creation and the relevance** of their research to state health's priorities.

2

Identify capability gaps in the ecosystem

The RIAF can be used to **identify capability gaps** within an organisation's environment or across the HMR ecosystem. This can **inform investment decisions** to accelerate research translation and amplify the impact of HMR investments.

3

Benchmark against best practice

The RIAF scores can be used to **benchmark** organisations against state averages or best practice. This will drive **quality improvement** across the HMR ecosystem.

4

Build an equitable and sustainable ecosystem

Unlike traditional ranking-based approaches that only reward high performers, the RIAF can be used to **guide the funding of targeted initiatives** that align with strategic priorities and **equitably build** the collective capability of the HMR ecosystem so that it can **generate long-term, sustainable value-based research** aligned with the needs of NSW's healthcare system.

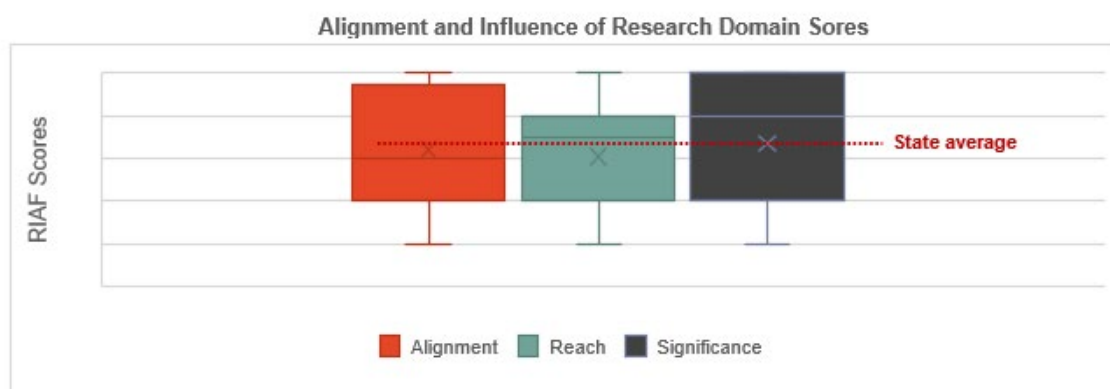
The RIAF includes a narrative to provide insights to stakeholders.

1

Increase transparency and visibility

Organisations using the RIAF can **assess research programs against the state average** across the alignment, reach, and significance criteria of the case study, as illustrated below.

Assessment results can be made publicly available to **encourage alignment and value-creation**.



2

Identify capability gaps in the ecosystem

The image below is an illustrative output of NSW's HMR ecosystem consisting of six organisations.

Organisations could use the RIAF to identify that:

1. ORG3's best practice in sustainability can be shared across the ecosystem
2. *Leveraged capacity* is an ecosystem-wide gap that may require capability building initiatives that can be applied across organisations in the ecosystem.

Environment Domain Scores

Organisation	Culture	Sustainability	Collaborative Capacity	Leveraged Capacity	Partnerships	Engagement	Implementation planning and evaluation	Capability building	Overall
ORG1	2.0	2.9	2.9	1.4	2.1	2.6	2.7	3.0	2.45
ORG2	2.7	3.7	3.0	2.3	2.8	2.8	3.1	3.2	2.94
ORG3	2.6	3.9	3.1	2.0	2.9	2.8	3.3	3.4	2.99
ORG4	2.5	3.5	3.2	1.9	2.7	2.6	3.3	3.4	2.89
ORG5	2.3	2.9	2.9	1.6	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.50
ORG6	2.3	3.2	3.1	1.8	2.4	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.64
Average	2.4	3.3	3.0	1.8	2.6	2.7	3.0	3.1	2.73

1 Understand why organisations performed exceptionally well and share findings

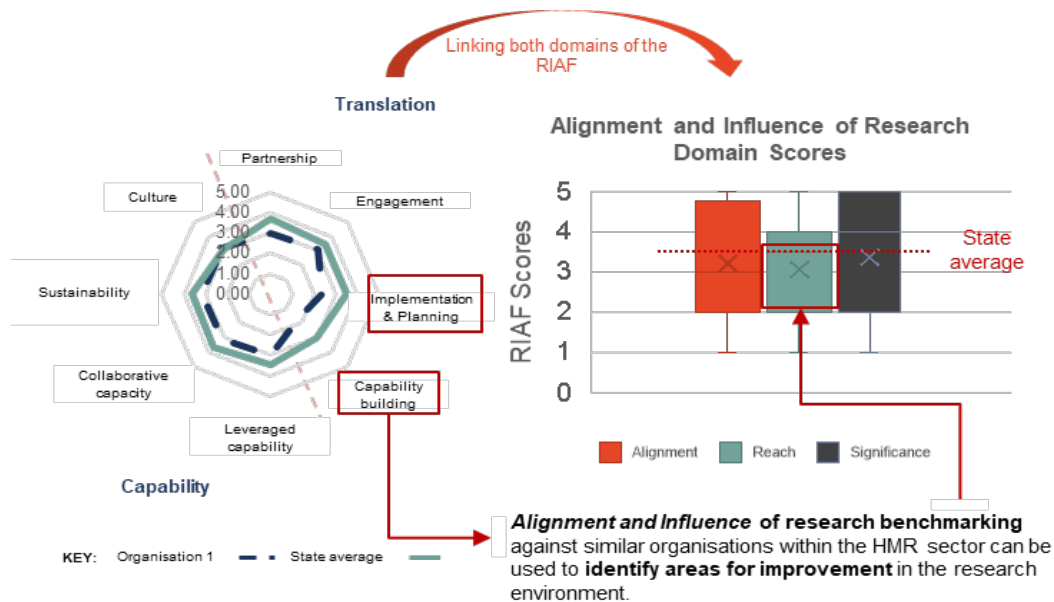
2 Explore opportunities to build capability in organisations to attract additional funding, political or resource support.



3

Benchmark against best practices

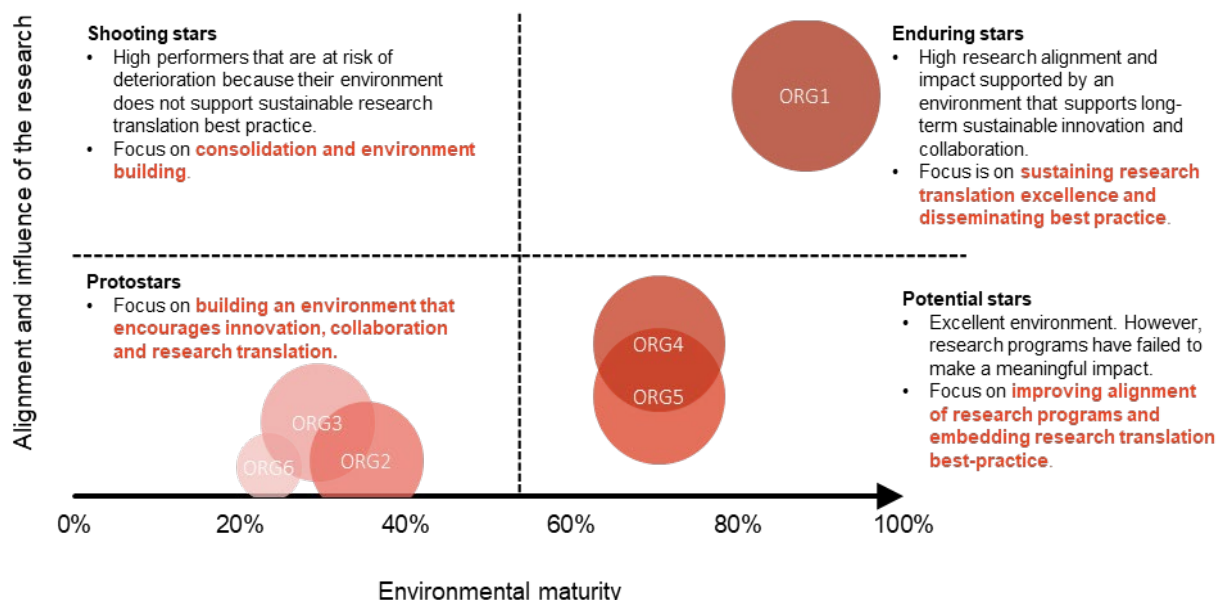
The RIAF can provide HMR sector **benchmarking** information across the environment and alignment and influence domains as shown in the illustrative example below. This will drive **quality improvement** across the HMR ecosystem.



4

Build an equitable and sustainable ecosystem

The RIAF identifies opportunities for organisations to **equitably invest** in building the collective capability of the HMR ecosystem so that it can **generate long-term, sustainable value-based research** aligned with the needs of the healthcare system. In the image below, the RIAF assessment scores for both domains are plotted on a matrix to identify four organisational profiles that offer insights into how organisations can allocate funding and support strategically.





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