

# Developing an impact framework for online palliative care resources

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## Aim

To develop a framework for assessing online health information outcomes and impacts.

## Background

CareSearch including palliAGED is an online knowledge platform providing trustworthy information and resources about palliative care for health professionals, people needing palliative care and their families, and for the general community. It is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.

There are specific sections written for patients and families, GPs, nurses, and allied health professionals. There is also a companion website, palliAGED which supports the aged care sector. All content is open access. For the CareSearch project, evaluation, outcomes, and impact must be considered with the landscape of being a digital project and of having a broader audience remit.

While CareSearch has well defined quality processes and a program logic model, demonstrating the value of online resources is complex and articulating the impact from funding challenging.

## Key findings

The scoping review found an emerging evidence base. Most studies dealt with individual level outcomes with few service level studies and only one system level investigation. Common measures included pre-post formats, validated repeated measures and non-validated questionnaires used at one point only. Clinical assessment measures were often used as an objective secondary measure of effect from online interaction.

The review of internal evaluation provided a rich range of study approaches and measures used to capture outcome and impacts. Identified measures included metric analysis, knowledge transfer, behaviour change, program evaluation and economic assessment.

The findings from both studies and review of the project's program logic and KPIs led to a three-level impact framework from the individual to the service/organisation to the system.

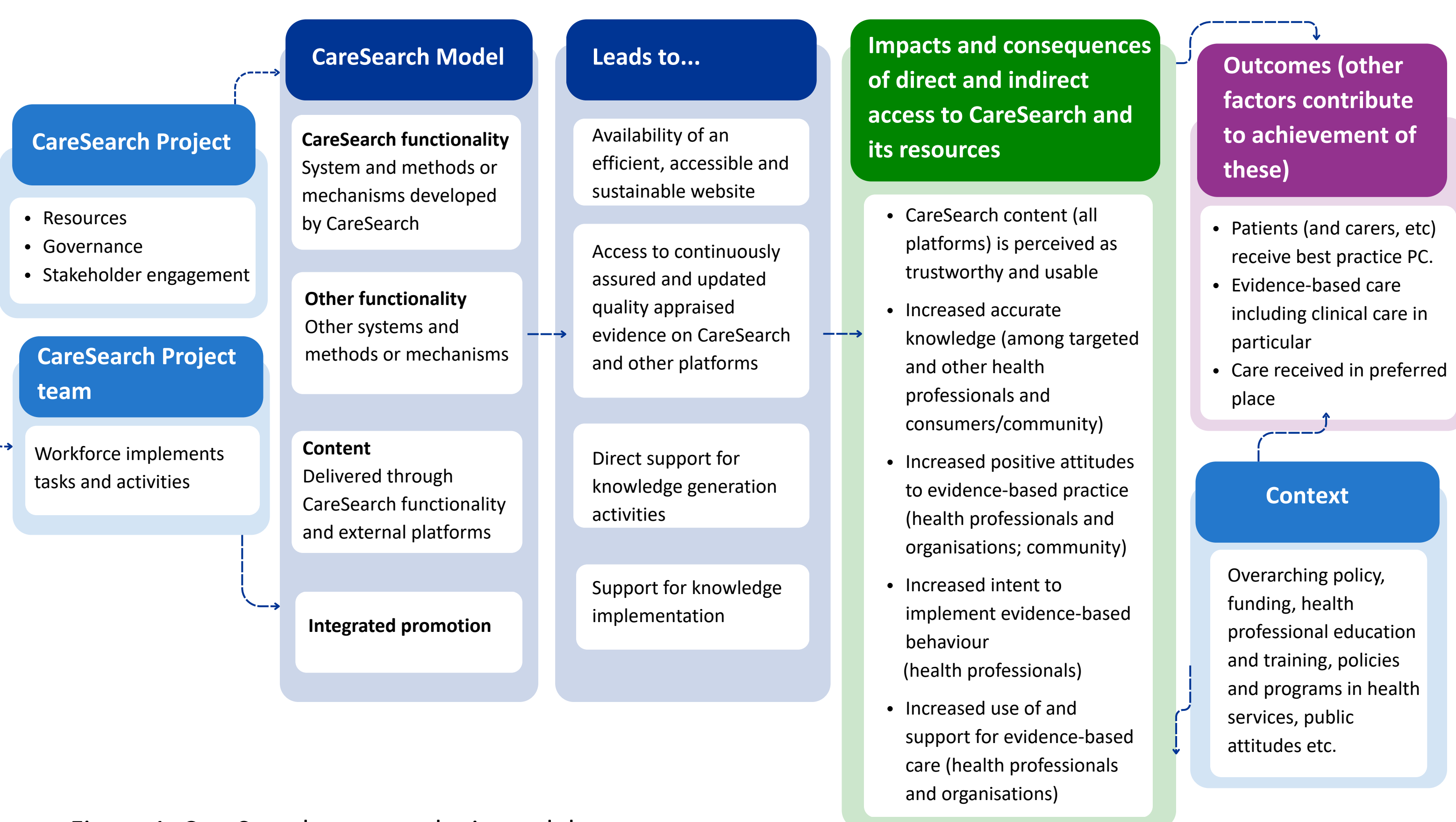


Figure 1: CareSearch program logic model

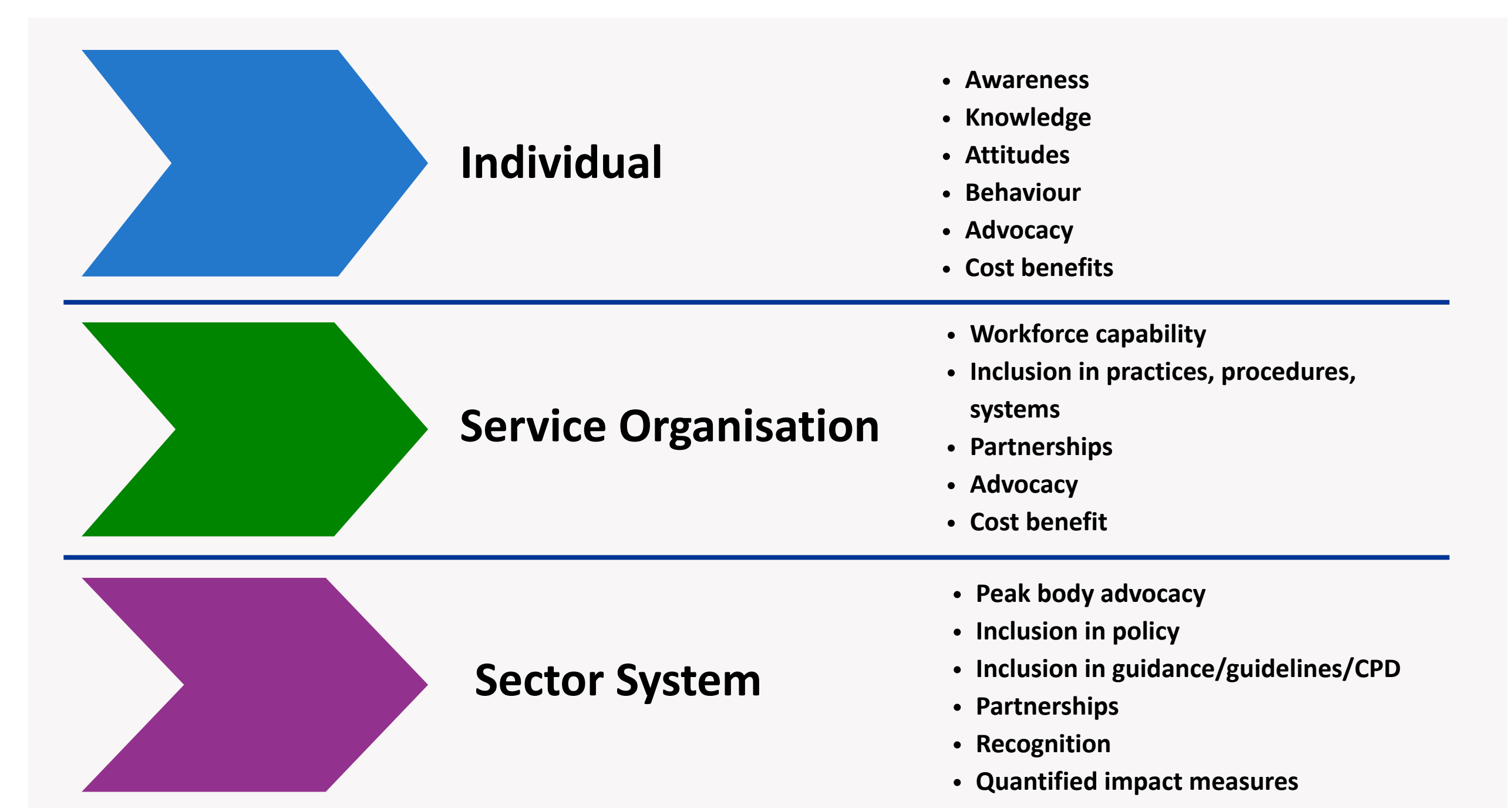


Figure 2: Proposed Impact framework

## Applying the framework

The utility of the framework has been tested by developing a data matrix for funder reporting against identified variables for the three levels. While it was not possible to ensure data against all measures, the framework provided a feasible method for reporting diverse data and for identifying options for future impact studies or data collections.

## Methods

- Documentation of possible measures from existing program logic, project deliverables project KPIs
- Scoping review of English-language studies published since 2013 indexed in the Ovid Medline and CINAHL databases provided an overview of current online health information evaluation methods and measures as well as impact definitions
- Analysis of findings and identified success indicators from 35 completed CareSearch and palliAGED evaluation projects
- Framework development and testing using in-process project activities
- Articulation of framework against CareSearch quality processes and program logic model.

### Example of how identified outcomes and impact metrics can be used in a data matrix

Micro	Meso	Macro
<b>Awareness</b> Example measures: Survey, engagement metrics	<b>Service involvement</b> Example measures: Focus groups, case study	<b>Peak body advocacy</b> Example measures: Inclusion of weblinks, references
<b>Knowledge</b> Example measures: Survey (pre-post, post only), interviews	<b>Inclusion in practice/systems</b> Example measures: Survey, interviews, focus groups	<b>Partnerships</b> Example measures: Network analysis, engagement matrix
<b>Attitudes</b> Example measures: Survey (pre-post, post only), interviews	<b>Partnerships</b> Example measures: Partnership registry, participation rates (e.g working groups)	<b>Inclusion in guidance/CPD</b> Example measures: Environmental scan, citation analysis

Figure 3: Applied framework using a data matrix