

# Navigating the Pacific evaluation landscape: Strengthening Pacific MEL for the Pacific by the Pacific



Pacific  
Community  
Communauté  
du Pacifique



**Connie Donato Hunt, Eroni Wavu, Fiona Fandim,  
Kaita Sem**

# Navigating the Pacific evaluation landscape



## 22 Pacific Island Countries and Territory members of SPC



# Strengthening Pacific MEL capacities

---

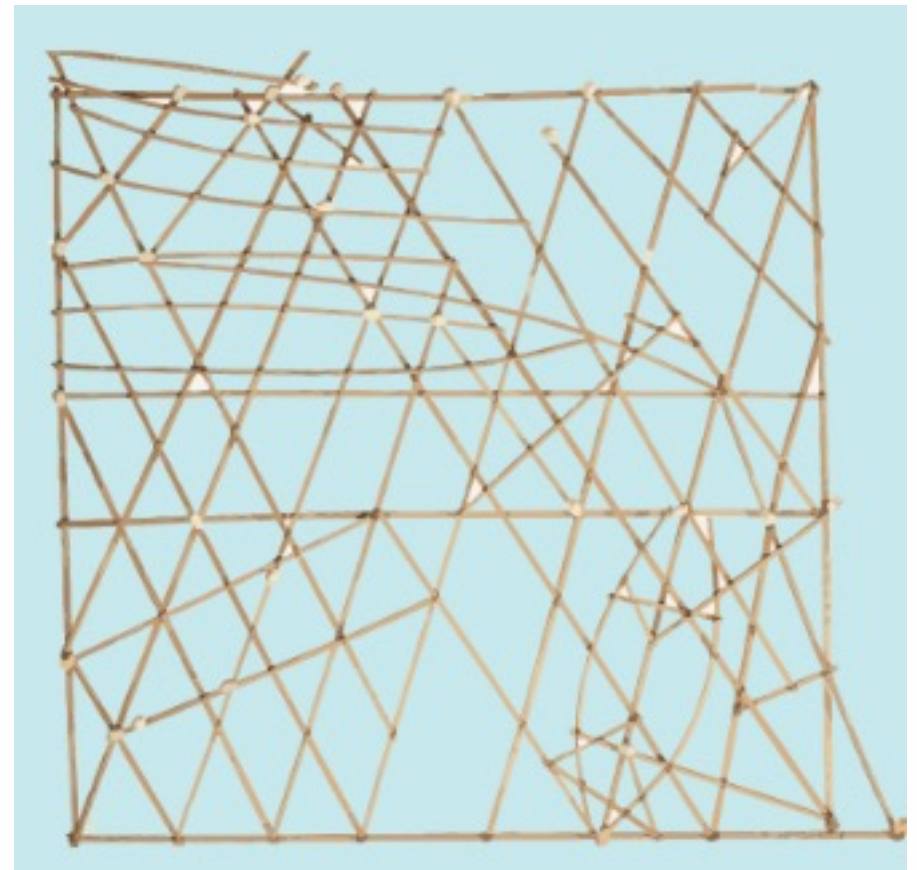
- 2017 Pacific Leaders call on SPC to explore the purpose and feasibility of developing a Pacific hub for learning and innovation.
- 2019 SPC formed a partnership with MFAT and Better Evaluation build a participatory process for capacity strengthening (Phase 1)
- 2020 launch of the Rebbilib.
- 2021-2024 The Strengthening Pacific MEL programme established to realise the goals of the Rebbilib. Funded by MFAT (Phase 2). The team leading implementation is the *Pacific-led Va'a*.



- Strengthening Pacific MEL (PacMEL) is a strengths based, contextually and culturally relevant approach to strengthen MEL capacity in the Pacific.
- Using Pacific metaphors and methodologies, including the Marshallese Rebbilib and Tongan Kakala Research Framework
- MEL stakeholders act as master navigators of their own MEL journey through partnership and meaningful collaboration.

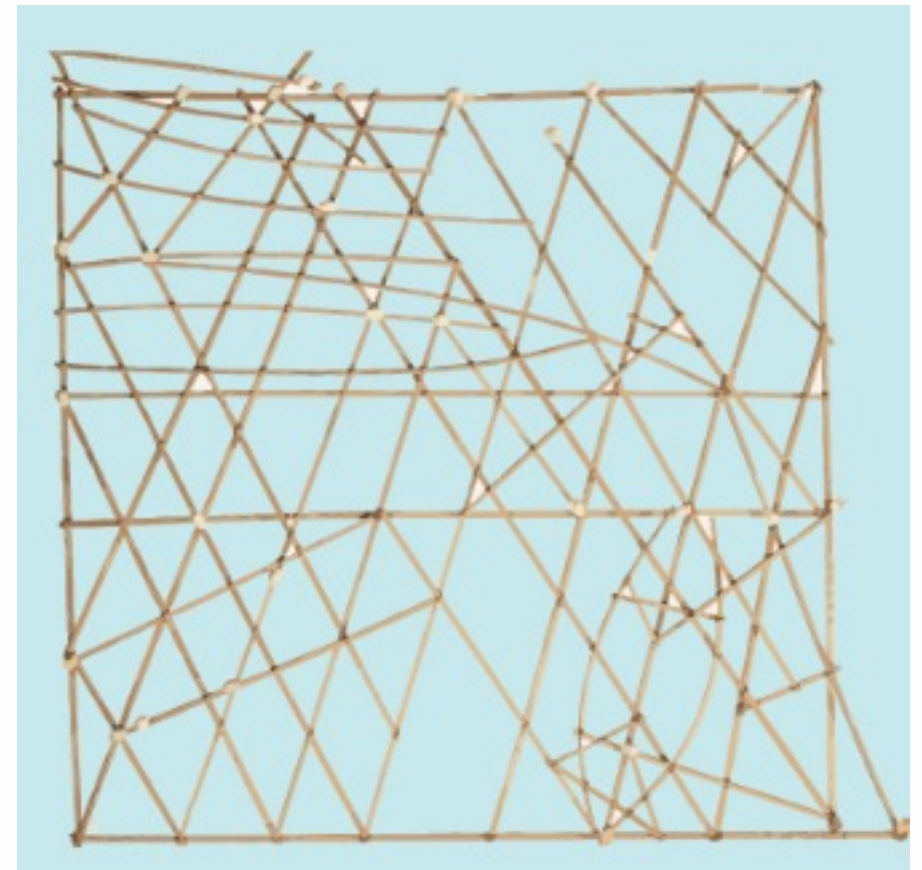
# Charting ways forward: About the rebbilib

- According to Marshallese culture, master navigators are people for whom “the knowledge of the stars, weather, and sea conditions and the capacity for making and interpreting sea charts is reserved”.
- These charts are known to identify waves, swells and islands, making it crucial for apprentices to be knowledgeable about sea conditions.
- This is likened to the process of developing this regional MEL rebbilib.

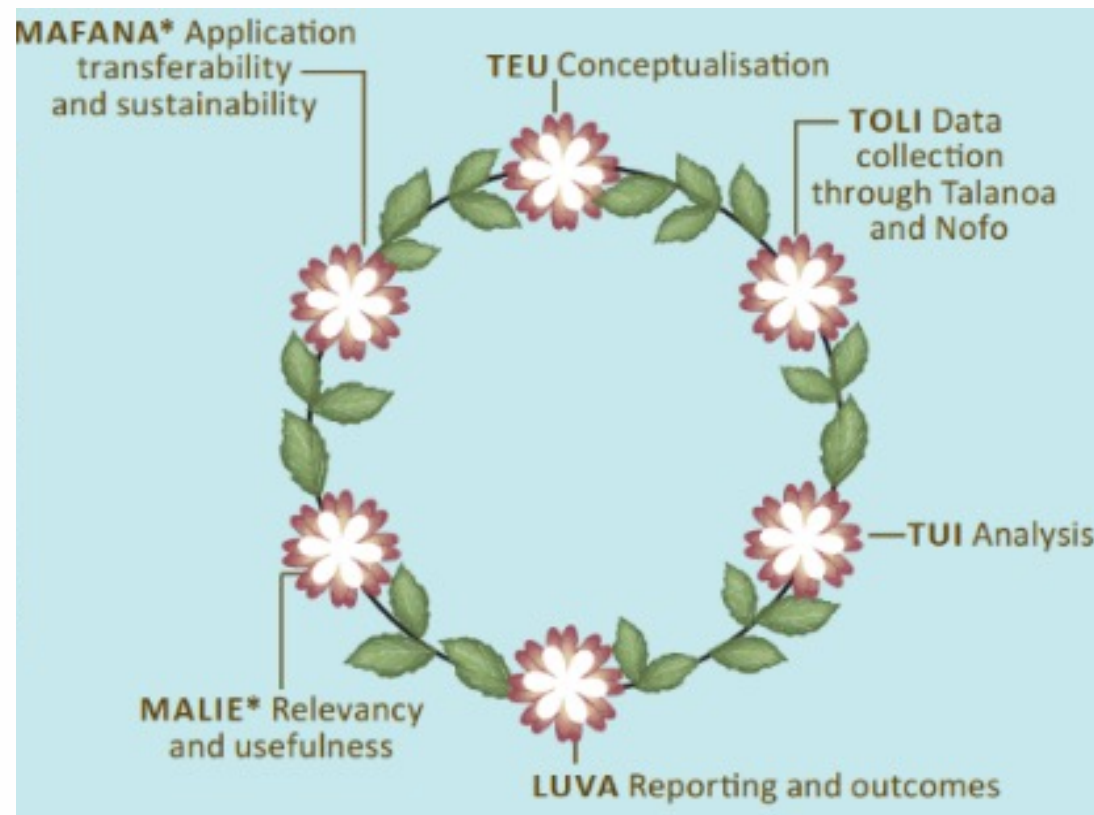


# Charting ways forward: About the rebbilib

- It has three domains:
  1. People partnerships and planning
  2. Collecting, verifying and analysing data
  3. Using data for decision-making.
- The mainstreaming of cultural and Pacific ways of knowing and doing provides the values, ethics and principles to position Pacific MEL practitioners as knowledge brokers and agents of change to drive a transformational regional MEL agenda.



# Our theoretical grounding is Pacific-oriented

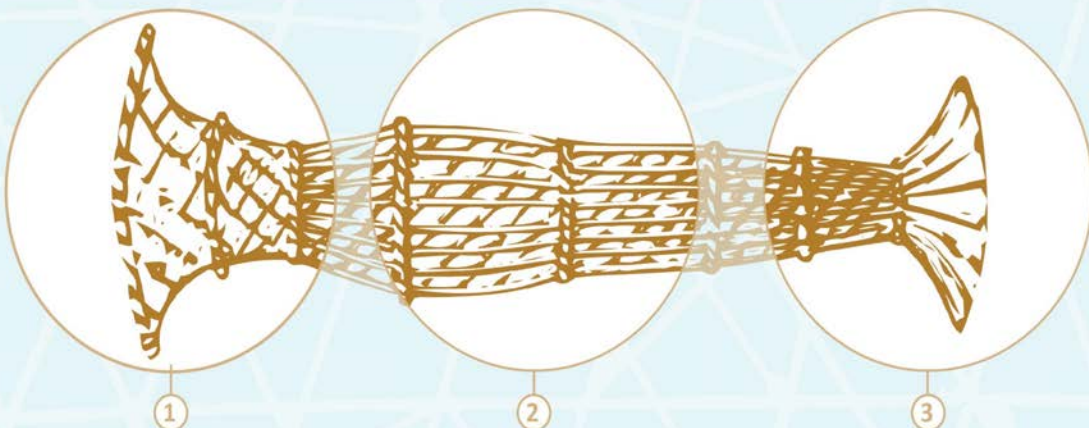


## The Kakala framework:

- Teu - project conceptualisation
- Toli - data collection
- Tui - analysis and sense-making
- Luva - an overview of the findings
- Malie - the relevance and usefulness to regional and global MEL efforts
- Mafana - the transferability and sustainability of the ways forward to navigate the Pacific towards stronger MEL systems.



LIKE A MELANESIAN FISH TRAP, OUR ENGAGEMENT HAS THREE PARTS:



1

Wide stakeholder engagement like the wide catchment of the net to gather information from diverse stakeholders across national governments, regional and international organisations and civil society

2

More purposeful stakeholder engagement through the narrowing of the catchment to convene deeper dialogue with a smaller group of stakeholders

3

Back out to a wider catchment of stakeholders to share back with diverse groups to map to MEL capacity development across the Pacific





Pacific  
Community  
Communauté  
du Pacifique

## Transformative change

- Pacific Leaders call for evidence
- Pacific MEL CoP mobilised
- Talanoa survey designed, implemented, validated
- Pacific Va'a
- Project Steering Community
- Pacific CoP and convenings
- Regional MEL qualification
- Coalitions of MEL networks



# Talanoa needs assessment survey

---

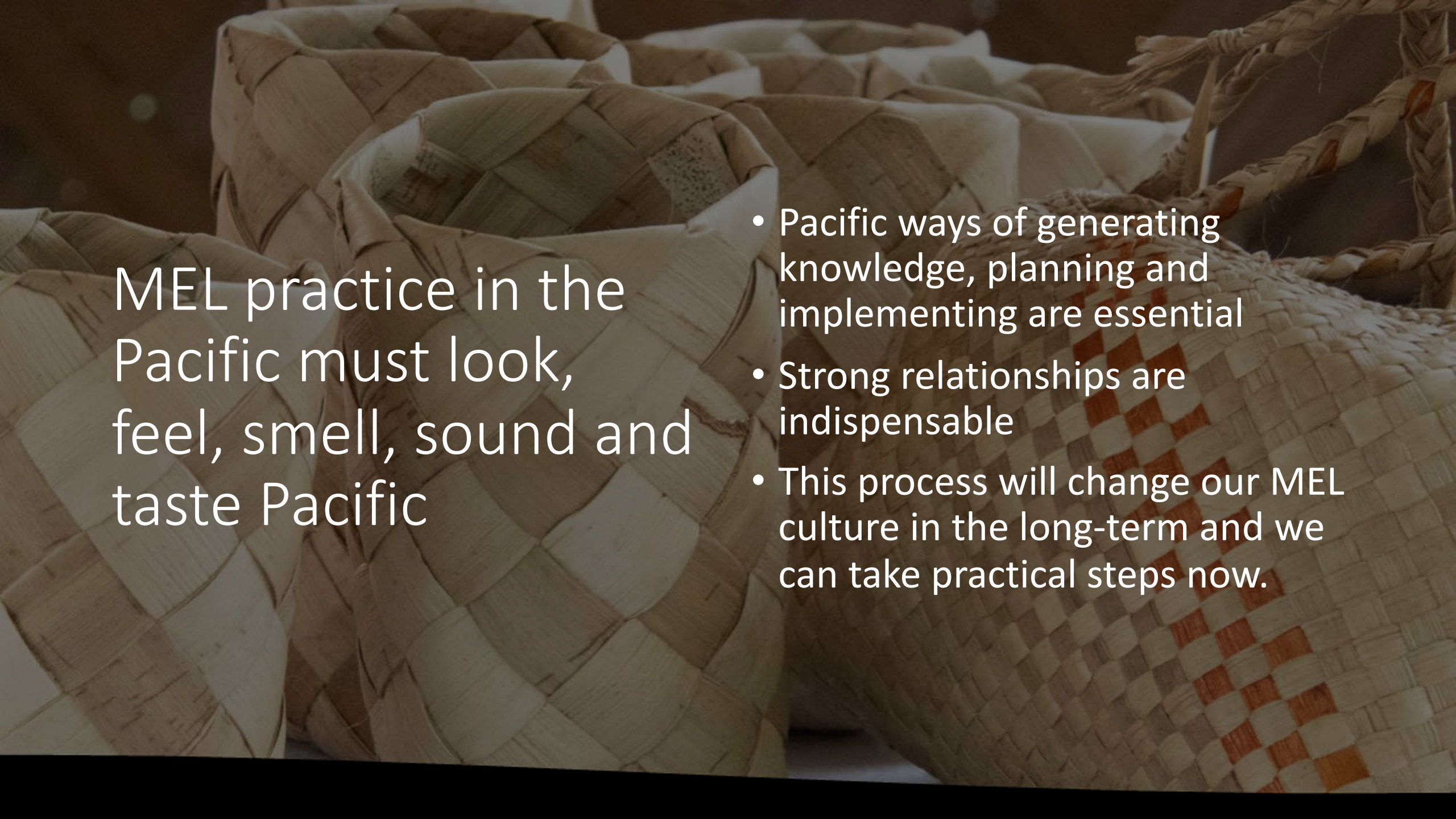
- A regional MEL needs assessment was conducted in 2022/23
- The “talanoa” survey is a self-assessment tool adapted to the Pacific
- It assesses the maturity of organisational MEL systems using a 3-point rubric scale of beginning, progressing and established
- Results are used to design capacity strengthening approaches, with focus areas those assessed as beginning and progressing.



# Key results

---

- Areas rated as beginning-progressing:
  - Supporting the use of MEL
  - Regional, national and sub-national databases
  - Applying contextual and cultural relevance in MEL
  - Data use for MEL purposes
  - Partnerships to plan, manage or coordinate the MEL system.
- Areas rated as more established:
  - MEL planning
  - Evaluations may be commissioned and conducted by donor partners
  - Gender and equity considerations in MEL.



MEL practice in the Pacific must look, feel, smell, sound and taste Pacific

- Pacific ways of generating knowledge, planning and implementing are essential
- Strong relationships are indispensable
- This process will change our MEL culture in the long-term and we can take practical steps now.