

# LESSONS LEARNED USING EVALUATION to WEAVE STORIES

...about the results of a large, interdisciplinary, multi-national development project

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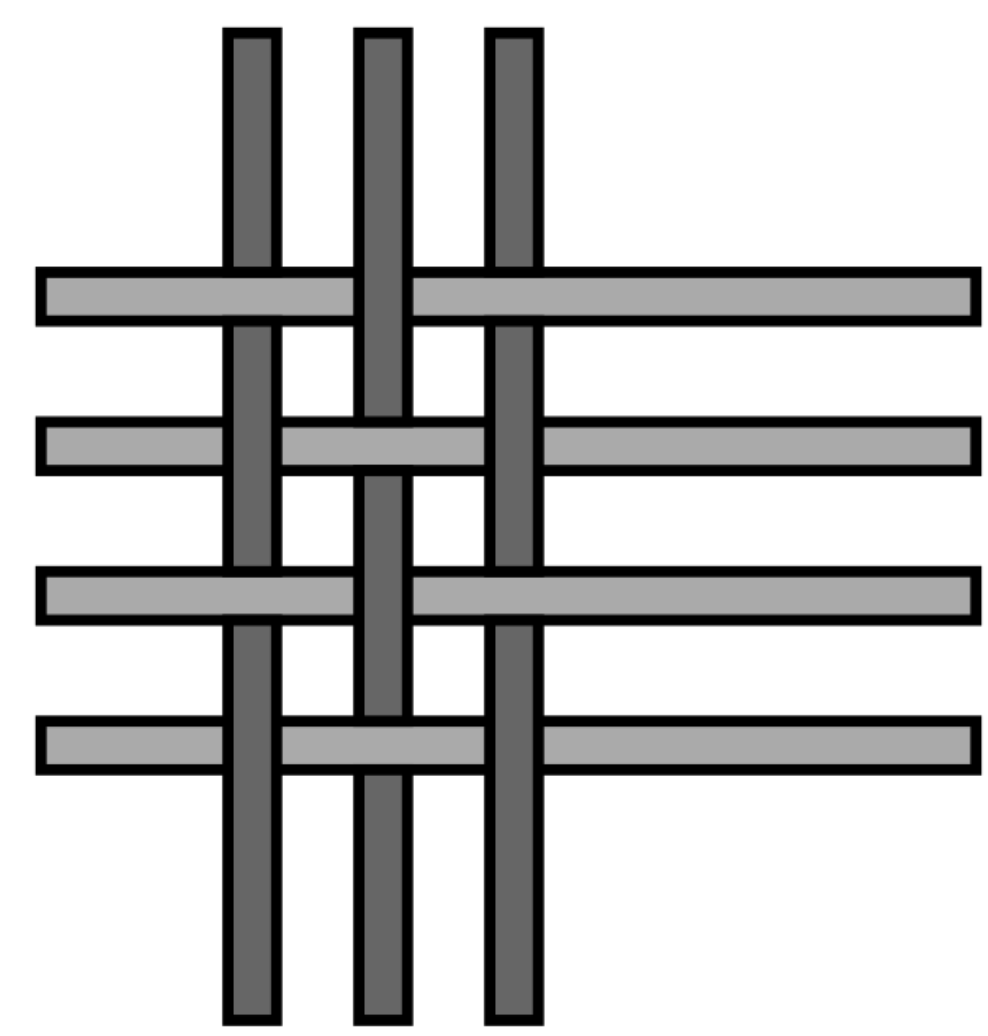
PERU-Hub

PERUVIAN EXTENSION AND RESEARCH UTILIZATION

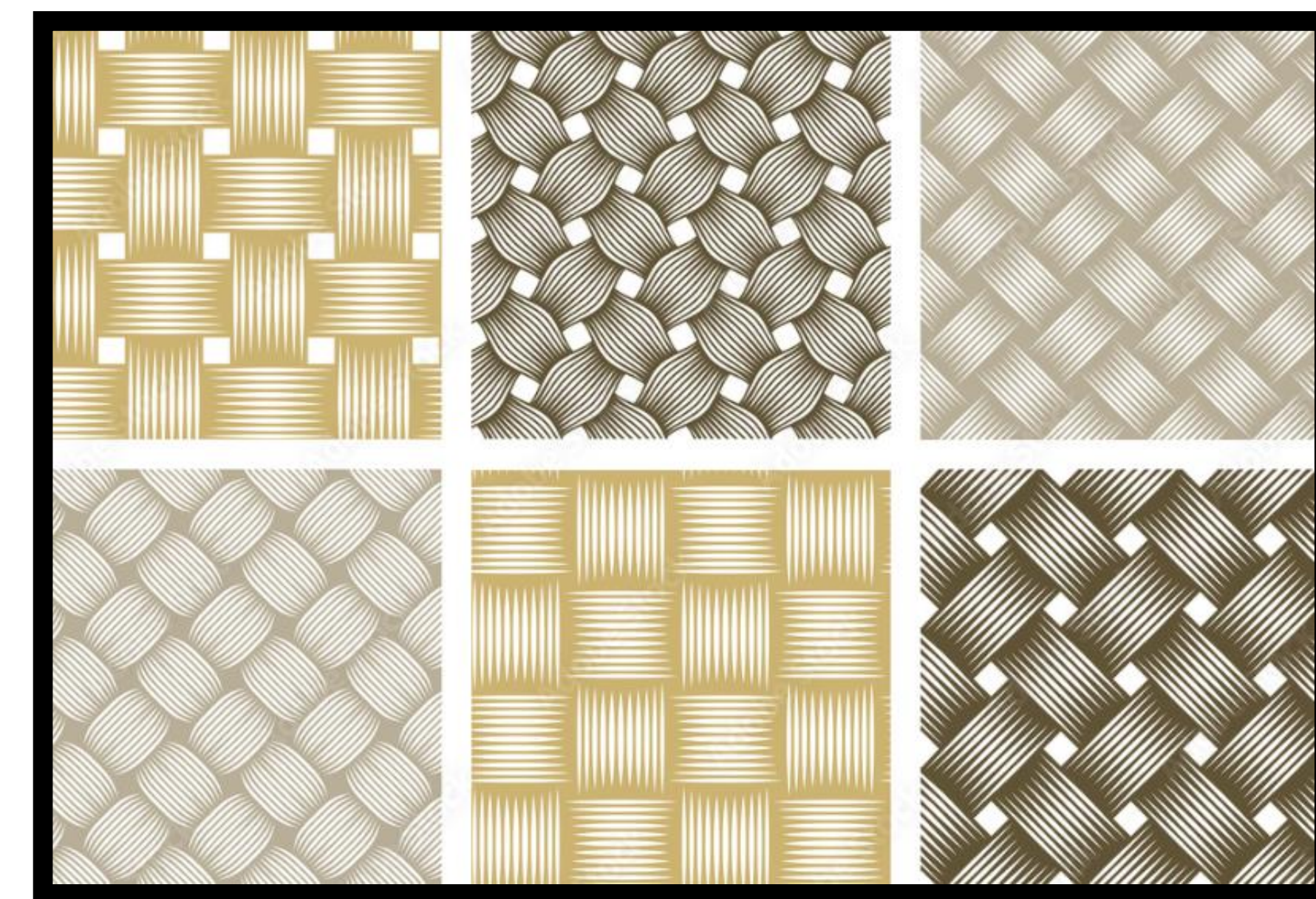


Multi-disciplinary, multi-sector, and multi-national partnerships are essential to effective international development practice. However, **partners often see the project through the lens of their discipline, sector, or prior experience.** This leads to partners emphasizing one aspect of the project's results over others or focusing on one area of impact to the detriment of the project as a whole. Engaging all partners in the project's monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) activities is crucial to maintaining focus on the project's systemic impact. **Telling the stories of multi-disciplinary, multi-sector, and multi-national partnership projects requires weaving many different threads of perspective, logic, information and values together** to create a holistic program tapestry.

PERU-Hub is an education, research and agricultural development partnership-project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development based at La Molina University's Regional Development Institute in the rainforest region of San Martin, Peru. In addition to La Molina University, the partnership includes three U.S. universities and a non-profit based in South America.



**Tension is necessary for learning.**



**Frameworks help to create meaning.**

The logic, perspectives and values of project actors and stakeholders are not always perfectly overlapped.

Tension in these threads can provide useful opportunities for learning.

Holding the tension and using it to create useful opportunities for continued dialog throughout the project can be helpful.

In PERU-Hub, our initial collaborative MEL planning helped to identify these tensions. Rather than banish them, we return to them during our collaborative learning activities each reporting period.

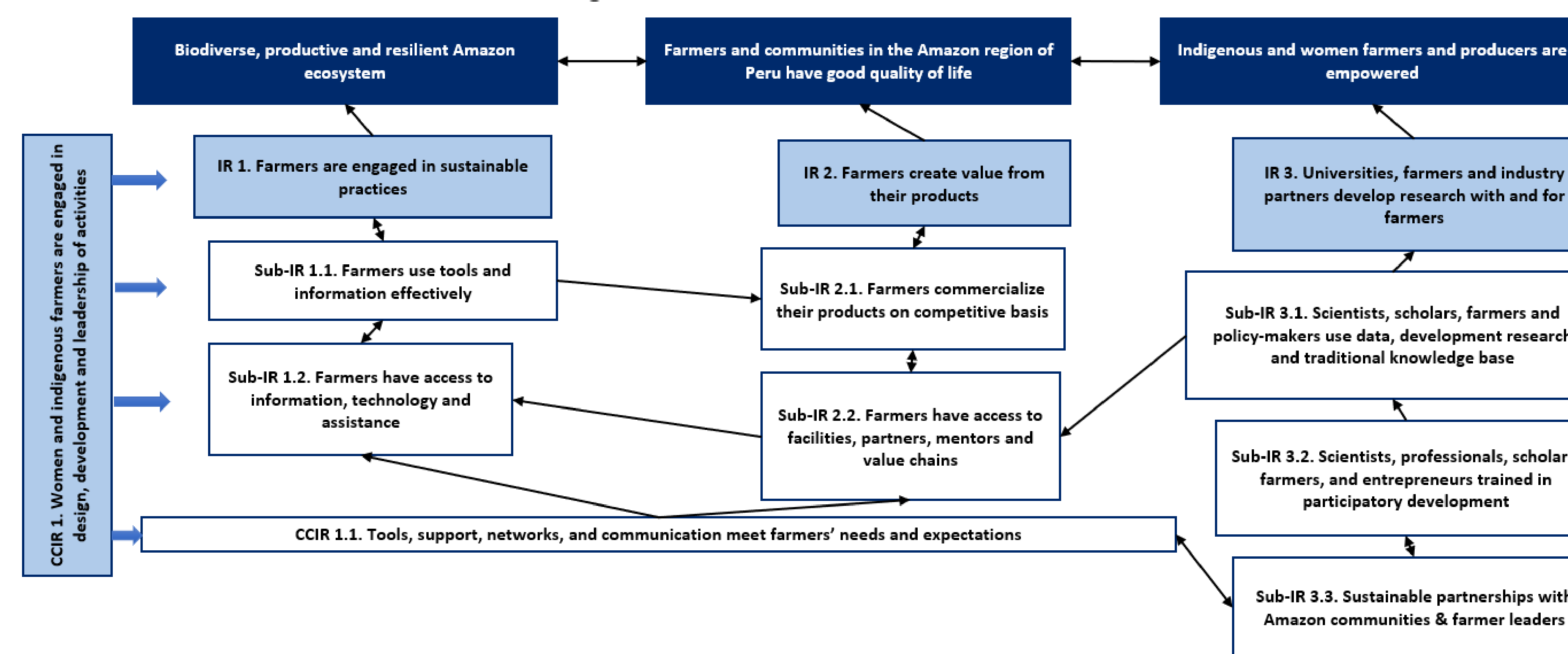


All project actors need to see the goal—or the overall pattern for the tapestry—so that they can understand where their actions and threads contribute to the overall mission.

In this kind of multi-disciplinary and multi-institution project, actors need to also understand and value the expertise and inputs of other project actors.

This requires intentional co-creation of the mission and team development activities. These activities are essential for creating relationships and connectivity that allow for sustained coordination through mutual respect and trust.

**The PERU-Hub results framework serves this purpose in our project. All project actors can use it to frame the story of their impact and it provides a common language for storytelling.**



**All stakeholder stories are honored in the tapestry.**

All project actors reflexively center their own perspective.

Honor their threads by providing them opportunities to weave stories.

Evaluators can find meaning in the tensions, overlaps, and patterns of these stories.

In PERU-Hub, project personnel are continually asked to qualitatively evaluate and interpret the project's progress. The MEL team works to make meaning of these stories and use them in project-wide learning activities.

