How to plan an Innovation in MEL

Learn how to plan (with some reference to reporting) an Innovation in MEL.

Planning an Innovation in MEL

(While innovations are usually recorded during the annual reporting exercises, they can also already be planned or drafted in MEL during the planning round to align uptake evidencing plans and pace during the year.)
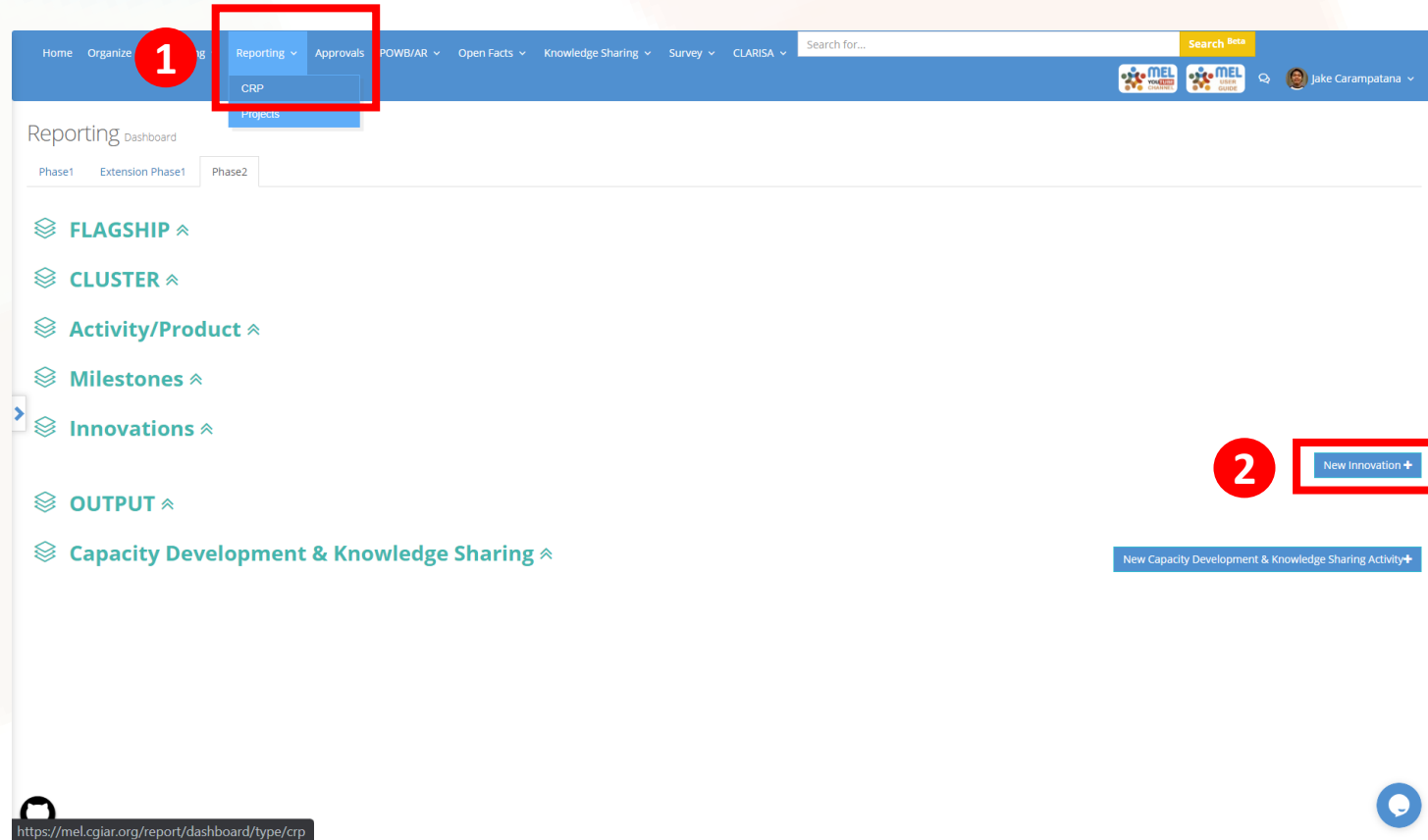
What is an innovation?

- Innovation is a new or significantly improved output or group of outputs - including management practices, knowledge or technologies.
- Innovation may also refer to a significant research finding, method or tool

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- Only Cluster leaders, Program Management Officers and MEL users with "CRP Admin" role, have the right to create new "Innovation reports".
- Once created, an innovation report can be assigned to the responsible scientist who can then access and further develop the innovation report later and create another report for the same innovation in each succeeding year as the innovation matures further, and uptake/impact evidences become available.

How to plan an Innovation in MEL:

To record an innovation, access the CRP reporting dashboard (#1: Reporting -> CRP). On the reporting dashboard, under the Innovations tab, click on the "New Innovation" button to open the template page (#2).

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- Using the template, the user will provide information following the structure of the form. The user creating the draft must enter the user`s name who is primarily responsible for the innovation under "Reporting Staff", so he/she has access to complete the report.

- As this is still a planning exercise, only six mandatory fields (red arrows) are required before the user can click on "Save as draft" (#1) to save the details, to be completed in the course of the year by the responsible scientist.

Populating the template: Basic information

- Basic innovation information needs to be entered before proceeding to the rest of the template sections. Enter the innovation title (30 words max, #2) and description (75 words max, #3), and the responsible scientist who will complete the report (#1).
- Using the dropdown menu, year of the current reporting round (#4), innovation type (#5) and relevant Sub-IDO(s) need to be selected (#6, #7).

Populating the template: Stage(s) of Innovation

This template can capture reporting of the different stages undergone by an innovation in the past year(s), even when the reporting is done only in the current year. Clicking on "**+**" will open an additional sub-template to retrospectively capture the innovation`s past stages reached (A). A button is also available to delete the unneeded "Stages of Innovation" sub-templates (B).

- To fill, input the required information:
    - 1- Choose the innovation stage from a dropdown menu.
    - 2- Choose the year when the innovation reached the stage in #1.
    - 3- Please provide a max 50-word description to characterize innovation`s state at the stage in #1.
    - 4- Please indicate if there was a lead organization responsible for this innovation stage
    - 5- Please choose the organization(s) if you ticked "Yes" in #4. If organization is not in the list, please request your MEL-CRP Admin to add the partner first.

Populating the template: Evidence(s) of stage reached

Evidences may include but not limited to journal articles, news and blogs, conference and media materials, datasets. Two options to reference evidence(s) in this template are available: the user can either use evidences already reported in MEL (A) or enter evidences not yet reported in MEL, manually.

- To use evidences already reported in MEL (A):
  - Click on "Select reported evidence +" to pop the menu up. Based on whether the evidence is reported under a CRP activity or Project (#1), filters will appear to reduce the number of reported files appearing in the menu once the user clicks on the "Search evidence" button(#2). Typing key words in the search box will make easy to find the evidence searched (#3). When the evidence is located, select the evidence into the innovation template (#4). See sample screenshot.
- For evidences not yet reported in MEL (B):
  - Manually enter the evidence citation (5), web link to the material (#6). Manually entered evidences can be added or deleted as needed (#7).

Populating the template: Contributing CRPs & Platforms

Note that selecting at least one CRP-mapping, and indicating the main contributing CRP are mandatory steps, even before the user can "Save as Draft" the template. Several CRP mappings (CRP > Flagship > Cluster > Activity) can be done for an innovation, but a main CRP needs to be selected by simply ticking the button. Attributing the innovation to a CRP mapping can be done in two options:

- To use the mapping of the evidences earlier retrieved from MEL (A):
  - Click on the "Retrieve CRP mapping from evidence button (#1). User will then be able to select from among the CRP mapping of the evidences to be reflected in this section of the template
- To manually indicate the CRP mapping(s) of the innovation (B):
  - Select from the dropdown menu the CRP (#2), Flagship (#3), Cluster (#4), Activity (#5), and in case, mark as the "Main CRP" by ticking the button (#6). Only one CRP mapping can be tagged as "Main CRP".

Populating the template: Partners, & Scope

- (A) If any, list additional partners contributing to this innovation. Using the "Add more partners" dropdown menu (#1), the organization can be selected which is then reflected in the table above (#2). If organization is not in the list, please request your MEL-CRP Admin to add the partner first.

- (B) Indicate the geographical scope of the innovation by using the dropdown menu (#3).

Populating the template: Linked Elements, Finalization

- When relevant, the innovation can also be linked to elements already recorded in MEL e.g. milestones (#1), related outcome and impact case reports (OICR, #2), and related policies (#3). These elements can be selected from a dropdown menu.

- When the template is accomplished, and the reporting scientists deems evidencing robust, and the information verified, the innovation report can be submitted (#5) for approval by the CRP Manager. Otherwise, when updating needs to be done to build an excellent innovation report, the user can opt to save the template as draft (#4) for completion and submission at a later time.

For more detailed information on how to plan innovations in MEL, you may kindly refer to [MEL Guide on recording innovations](#).

Thank you for using