



Supporting Scotland's Land Use Transformations: Monitoring and Evaluation of QST 1 & 2

Kirsty Blackstock, Alba Juarez-Bourke

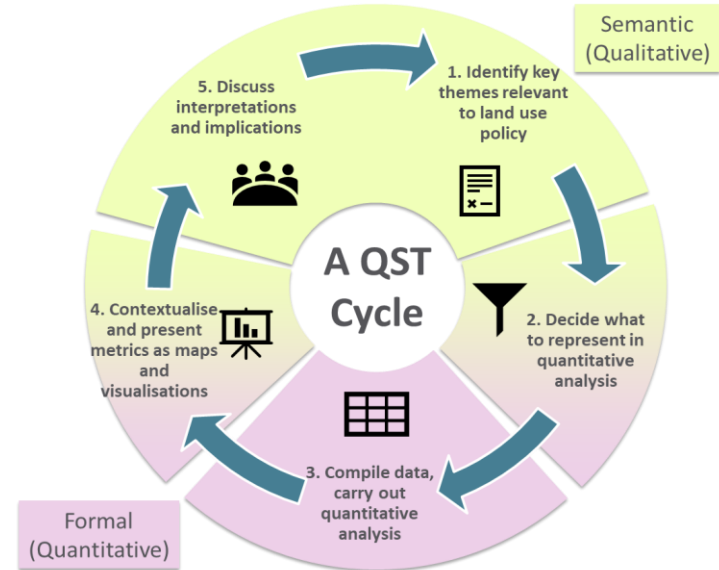
End of Year 4 meeting with Scottish Government - 21st April 2026.



The James
Hutton
Institute

What is Quantitative Story Telling (QST?)

- QST is an approach to **Science-Policy interaction**. QST aims to embed SRP research into policy processes by providing tailored findings at the appropriate time to the relevant people.
- The **idealised cycle of QST** is shown to the right. Stage 1 & 5 of the cycle is about building joint understanding and Stage 3 is about generating spatial or quantitative patterns; with stages 2 & 4 making the transition between qualitative and quantitative analyses.
- To make sure that **we are using QST effectively**, we need to evaluate how it works in practice. Therefore, we monitored and evaluated two cycles of QST from August 2022 until December 2024 - see [Report](#)
 - We continue to track and reflect on the impacts.

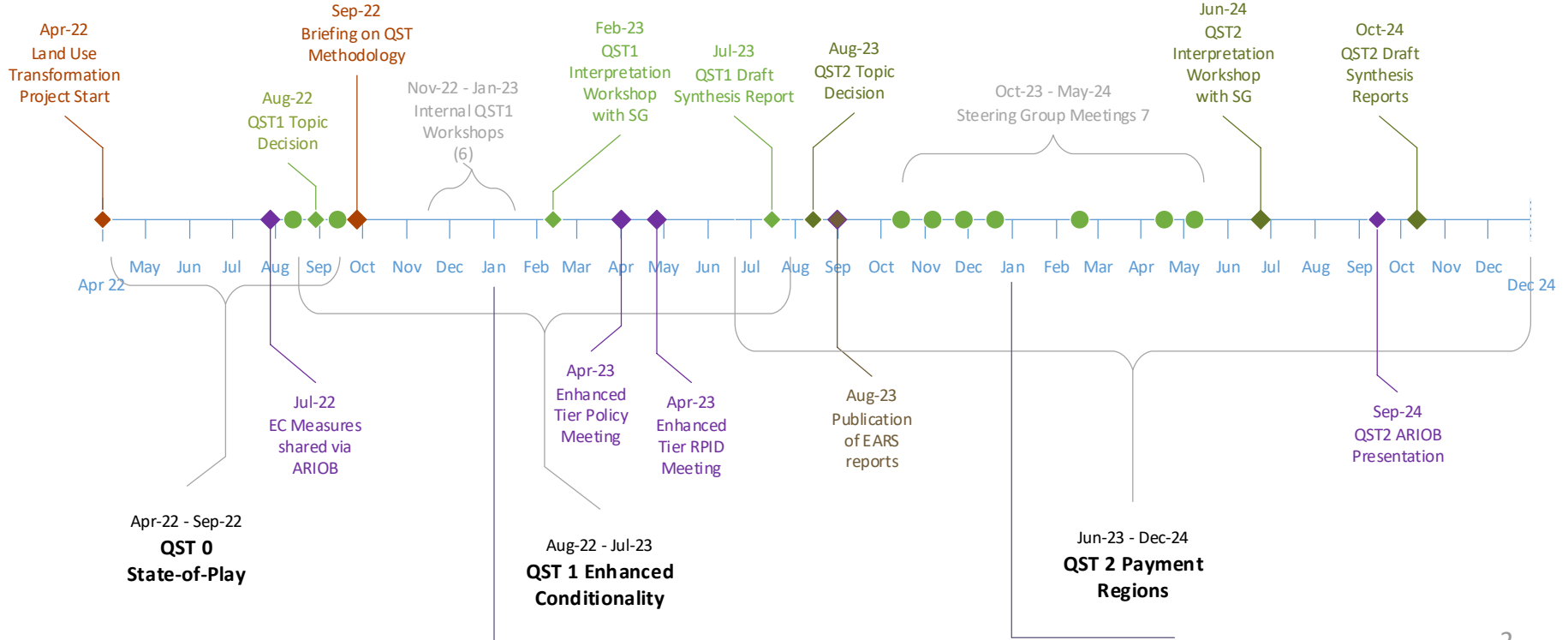


[QST Briefing](#)

[Slides from end of year presentation 2024](#)

[Slides from end of year presentation 2025](#)

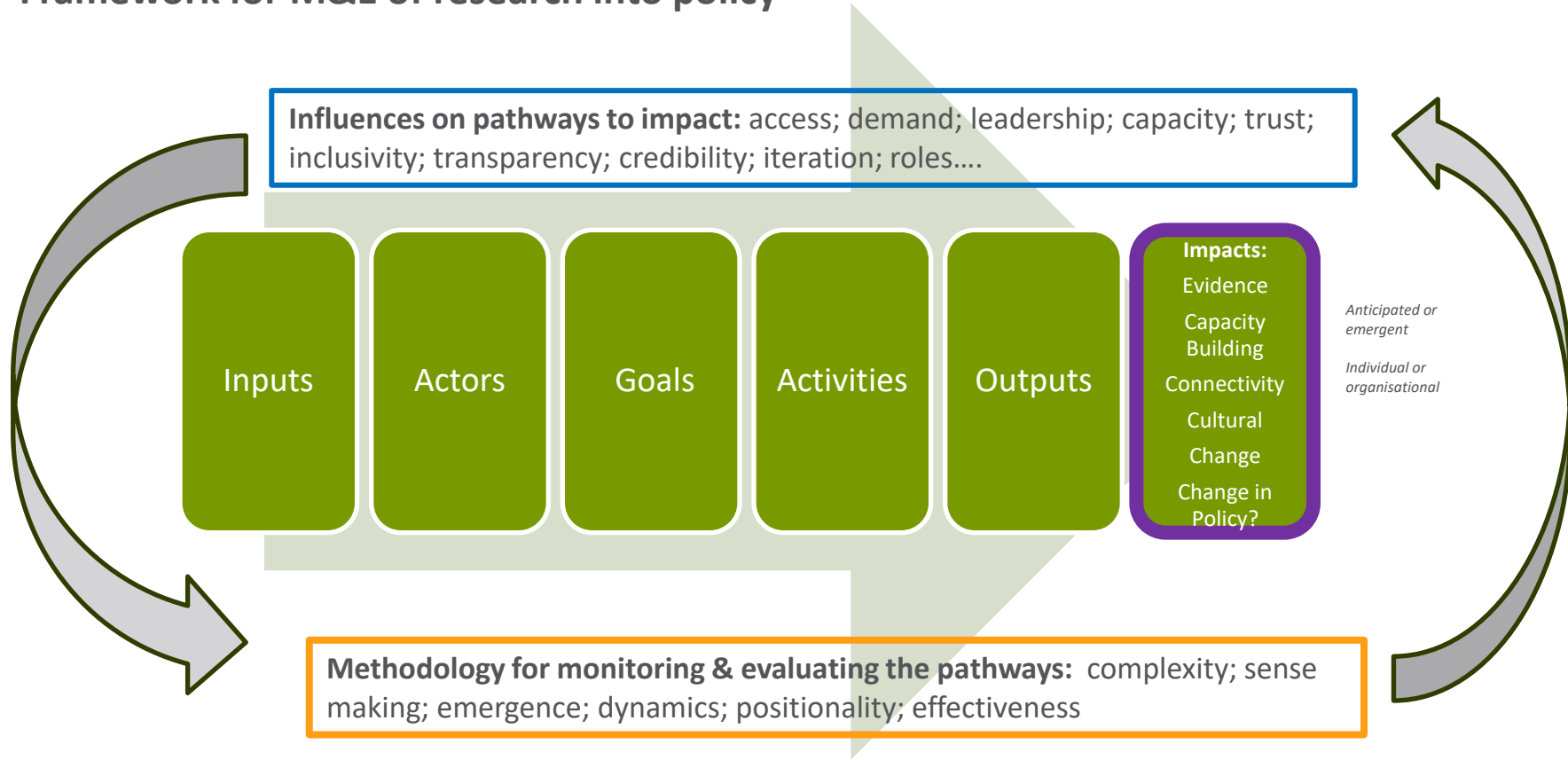
Legend: QST0 was an internal capacity building process to help the team understand the methodology. QST = Quantitative Story Telling; EC = Enhanced Conditionality; ARIOB = Agriculture Reform Implementation Oversight Board; SG = Scottish Government; RPID = Rural Payments and Inspections Division; EARS = Economic Advice for Rural Scotland



What have we done this year?

- Focus on ‘open science’ and ‘impact agenda’ leading to D12 (publication) May 2026
- Developed analytical framework linking D10 findings on QST1 & 2 to theoretical debates over pathways to impact
- Using this framework to reanalyse data from QST1 and QST2
- Figure (next slide) shows
 - Theory of change necessary but not sufficient
 - Attention to multiple types of impacts
 - Attention to multiple influences on the pathways
 - Need for dynamic systemic evaluation approaches
- Contribution – unique longitudinal focus on **agricultural** Science-Policy Interface looking at **policy instruments** (not implementation)

Framework for M&E of research into policy



Next Steps

- Paper to be submitted end May
 - Circulate a draft early May
- Light touch M&E of QST3
 - What: who is involved, what happened
 - How: meeting notes
 - Why: difficult to evaluate ourselves; no deliverables required
- Continue to track impact of QST1&2

Contact – Kirsty Blackstock, The James Hutton Institute, Aberdeen, AB15 8QH,
Tel - +44 (0)1224 395291,
kirsty.blackstock@hutton.ac.uk

Staff web pages: [currently under construction]
<https://www.hutton.ac.uk/people/kirsty-blackstock/>
<https://www.hutton.ac.uk/people/alba-juarez-bourke/>

Prior QST resources:
<https://landusetransformations.hutton.ac.uk/outputs/d2-briefing-qst-methodology>
[D10.1 Policy Briefing on the Evaluation of Quantitative Storytelling | Land Use Transformations](#)
[D10.2 Technical Report on the evaluation of Quantitative Storytelling | Land Use Transformations](#)

The James Hutton Institute is supported by the Scottish Government's Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services Division (RESAS)