

Māori Forestry Paradigm

Purpose

Ngā Pou a Tāne (NPAT) requested that Scion prepare a brief document to make a case for a Māori forestry paradigm. This document presents a causal loop diagram that visually demonstrates a view of a Māori forestry paradigm, along with a more detailed explanation of its components. A two-page liftout is appended for quick reference.

Background

On 11-12 May, NPAT convened Ngā Kōrero Rangatira mō Ngā Hua Ngāhere, a summit of Māori land and forest owners, Māori foresters and researchers (the Summit). Attendees of the Summit agreed that NPAT should represent collective Māori interests in forestry at a national level and that NPAT should develop a national forestry strategy. During the Summit, attendees articulated a range of aspirations for Māori forests, including a description of the state(s) of Māori forestry. There was also an articulation of what would be a distinctly Māori approach to forestry, or a *Māori forestry paradigm*, that differs from the current two main approaches to forestry – plantation forest for production or standing forests for conservation. NPAT approached Scion to help articulate what a Māori forestry paradigm is, how it could operate, and thereby provide the basis for NPAT to make the case to others for enabling this Māori forestry paradigm to help advance Māori collective aspirations in forestry.

On 27 July, Scion met with Ramona Radford for NPAT to ideate how to present a case for a Māori forestry paradigm. During that meeting, attendees developed a draft network of elements and the relationships between them using a causal loop approach. This was used to depict a version of the paradigm and the current state of Māori forestry. The diagram was seen as a tool that NPAT could use in conversations to make the case for a distinctly Māori forestry approach. The diagram could be used to make the case for doing further work and to define the content of a Māori forestry paradigm. As such further work could be done to add detail to the paradigm, or develop a version of what the current paradigms (conservation or plantation exotic forestry) looks like in comparison.

Note that this diagram presents our team's perspective, and that others may view it differently (to take a "soft systems" stance).

Approach and Method

A causal loop was selected as the best tool for NPAT because it visually presents complex information in a simple format. Causal loop diagrams are used in complexity science and systems analysis. They provide an easy way to understand and digest key elements of a complex system, or nested systems, to identify how those elements interrelate, and develop potential pathways for change and transformation.

There are three key components of the causal loop: variables or notes in the system (circles), relationships between variables (arrows) and the nature of the connection (pluses and minuses). For the latter, a double plus indicates a strong positive effect or increase (+ +) or a strong negative effect or decrease (- -).

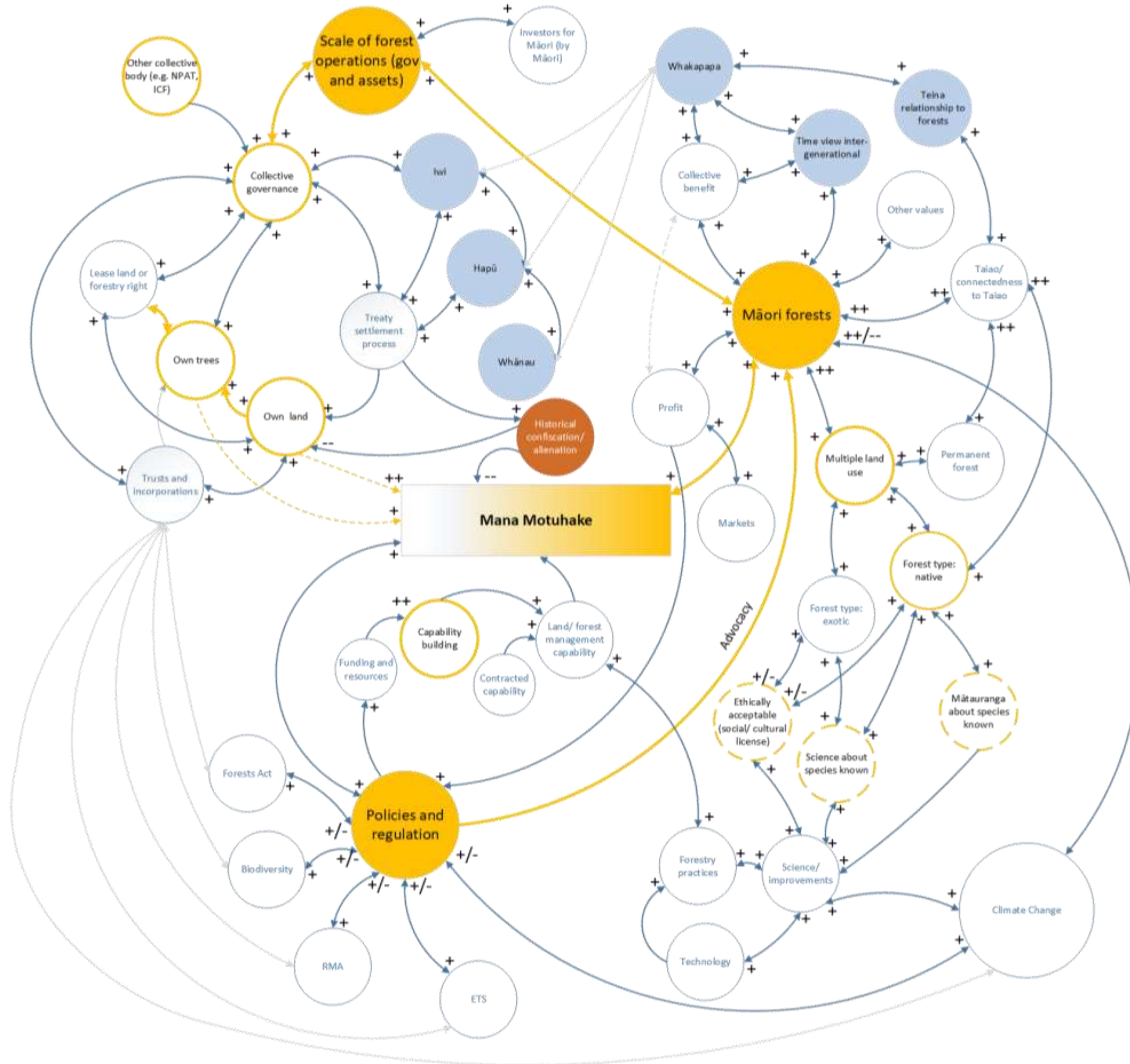
This document presents a causal loop diagram depicting three key elements for a Māori forestry approach. It depicts the state of Māori forest operations (including governance and assets), the values that underpin a Māori forestry approach (the frame for a Māori forestry paradigm) and the enabling environment.

We have used colours for different nature of variable or to highlight key components. A blank white circle is a standard variable. Light blue indicates Māori values. A full yellow circle is highlighted as a "hotspot" or a key variable. A white circle with yellow outline highlights a minor key variable or aspiration for Māori.

In terms of arrows, a standard arrow is blue. A grey arrow is an association or connection to a more minor extent. The thicker yellow arrows are a "golden thread" that in our view is a key relationship.

Following the main diagram, we have included an explanation of various components of the causal loop diagram to help its interpretation.

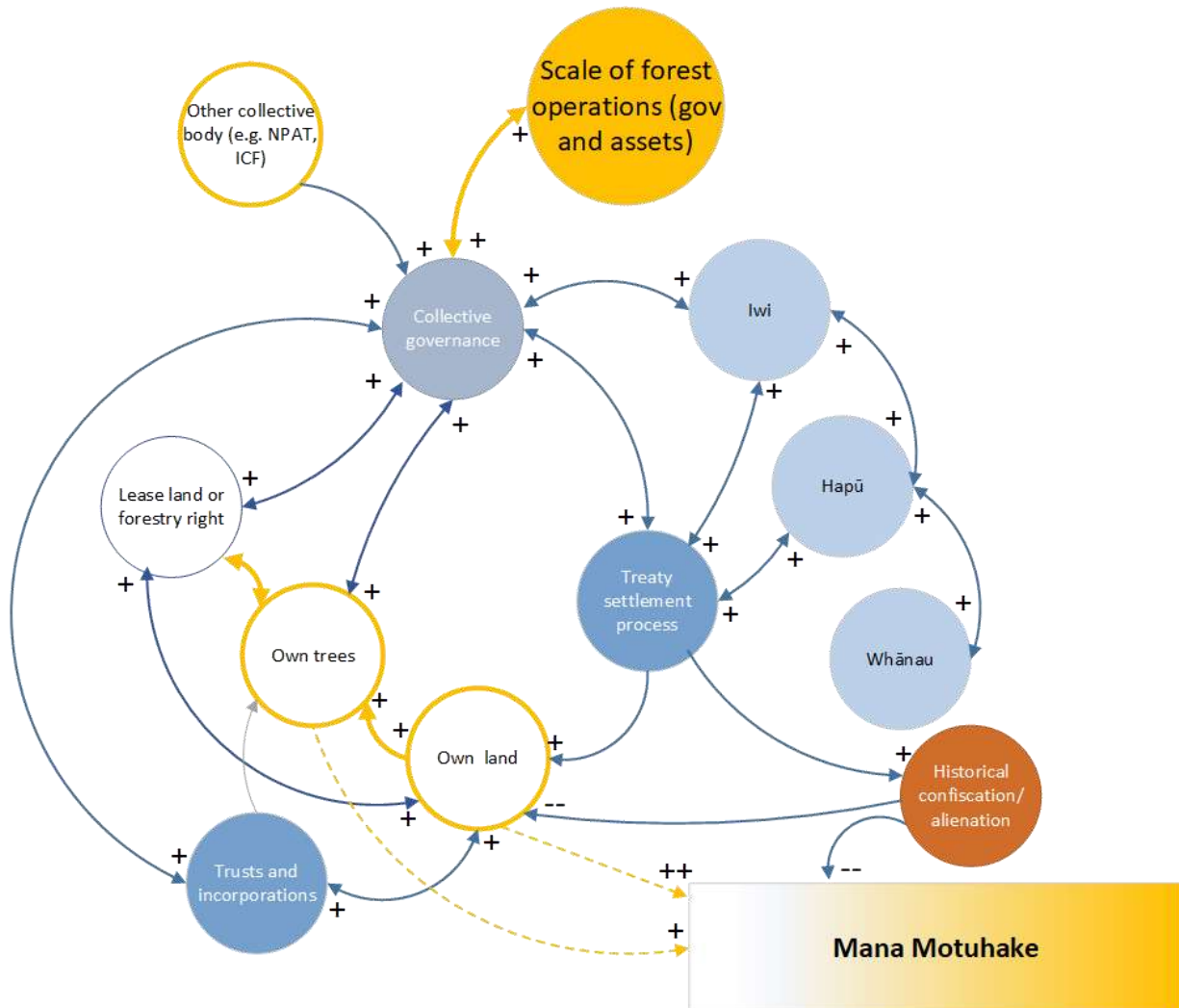
Full Māori Forestry Paradigm Causal Loop



Overarching Aspiration

The overriding theme from the Summit was an aspiration for Māori to have mana motuhake. **Mana motuhake** represents the overarching aspiration of Māori for self-determination and having the ability to make decisions about things that matter to them (at various levels of governance). At the Summit, Māori expressed a desire to regain their land and control over their forests. For some, this was a pathway by utilising plantation forestry to transition to better economic independence in a journey to re-establish indigenous or mixed forests, or to enable a more Māori-values based approach in forests and forestry. All areas and variables of this causal loop link back to mana motuhake.

Below, we have broken aspects of the causal diagram down into smaller segments for explanation.



State of Māori Forestry and Governance

The diagram above shows the dynamics and context of Māori governance. It highlights the impact that historical confiscation and land alienation has on the ability of Māori to be able to make decisions about land use. It also shows how decision-making is often fragmented and overlapping structures that are more culturally-based (whānau, hapū and iwi) and those which are contemporary (trusts, incorporations and post-settlement governance entities).

An important aspect of considering forestry is the importance of **scale**, particularly in making forestry options viable. This is in respect of both governance and assets. For *governance*, this is achieved through scaling upward through hapū to an iwi level where necessary; through post-Settlement governance entities; or purpose-built collaborations. For *assets*, scale improves the viability of ventures,

especially in the forestry sector. We are fortunate that scale of operations has been bridged by Māori in other sectors and therefore provides a blueprint of what is possible (e.g. Federation of Māori Authorities, Iwi Collective Partnership). NPAT is already occupying this space in respect of forestry, and may find innovative ways to improve or ignite participation of collective members across the value chain.

At the Summit, participants highlighted their aspiration for Māori to participate across the whole value chain. This included a suggestion that forest owners utilise progressive rotations to improve their capacity to expand their operations. This was not a direct consideration for the drafting of a Māori forestry paradigm, so is not addressed here. However, we note that the paper that Dr Richard Meade has prepared for NPAT addresses this question.

While considering scale, there are other potential methods to mitigate the need to create scale, such as distributed systems approaches.

A Māori Forestry Paradigm

At the Summit, Māori highlighted a selection of values that are distinctly Māori, which form the basis of a **Māori forestry paradigm**. The diagram over the page provides an initial snapshot of these values. One key value was whakapapa which connected people to collectives (whānau, hapū and iwi), to future generations who should benefit from land use decisions of today, and to the environment. In terms of nature, there is also the connection to Tāne and his other children. People occupy a teina relationship to other species and therefore hold an obligation to trees and other species by virtue of this relationship. It informs our connectedness to the environment, and therefore to our forests.

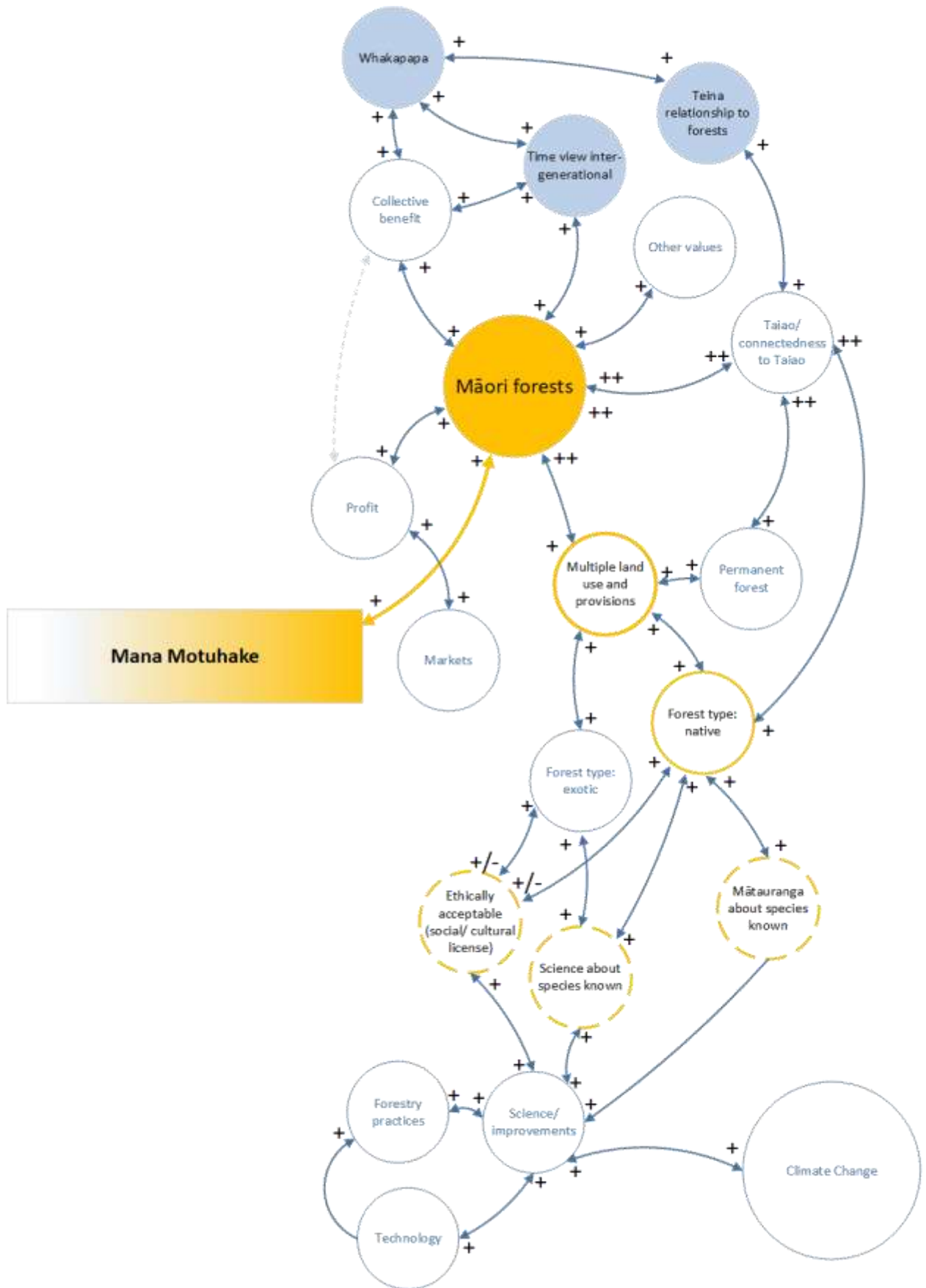
For this reason, the Taiao, rather than revenue, was seen as the bottom line. Revenue continues to be in the mix of priorities as it enables benefits to return to the people, and is part of the pathway to regain mana motuhake over lands and forests.

A Māori forestry paradigm is distinctively different in that it is framed by Māori values. Foremost is whakapapa and the connectedness to both other people and to nature. In terms of people, and the connection to whānau, hapū and iwi, there is a driver for the collective benefit of people. This is expressed in terms of present generations, but also an intergenerational perspective to the past and to the future. The value(s) and provisions from forests should serve collective benefits. We have highlighted profit here and connection to market, but acknowledge that there are other values for collective benefit that can also be defined at whānau, hapū and iwi levels as well.

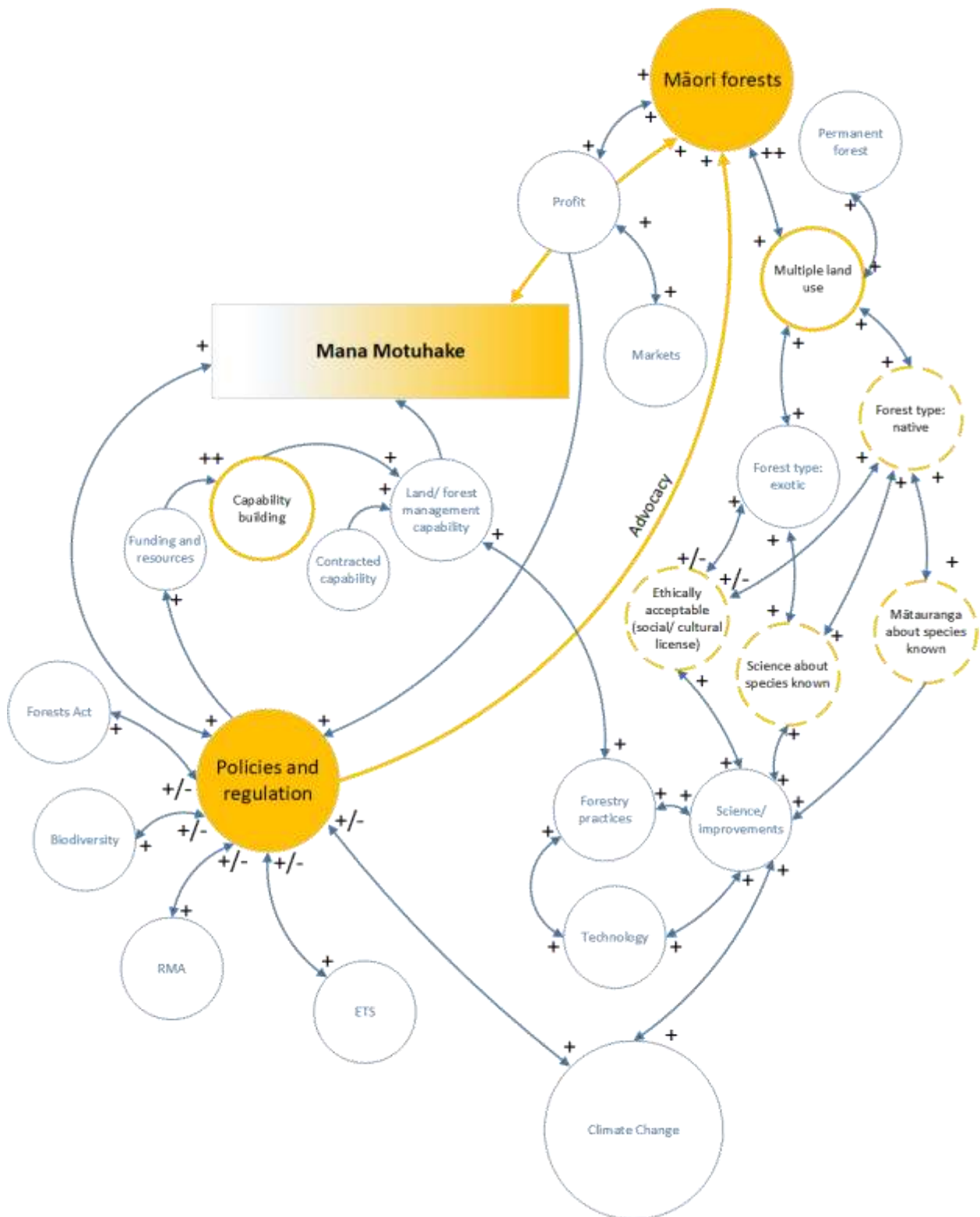
The present forestry paradigm pushes us to consider forestry as production plantation forests – but this has become increasingly problematic. We need a new way, which a Māori forestry paradigm could provide. A Māori perspective is more holistic and integrated and could provide a distinct alternative to our current approaches.

In the diagram over the page, the lower area is positioned around the current thinking – in single purpose production forestry or conservation forestry, but Māori aspire to something different – an approach that is more holistic, integrated and based on multiple uses. In time, with the implementation of such a new model, that the way these elements are arranged will change. If successful in making implementation of a Māori forestry paradigm possible in practice, these elements will shift and reflect a Māori approach.

To the bottom end of the diagram we acknowledge different forest types, and the function of all related knowledge (mātauranga, science and technology) to forestry practices. We have inserted multiple land use into this model because of Māori aspirations to have multiple values and functions from land uses and forests.



Enabling Environment



An enabling environment consists **of improving capacity and capabilities** and of **reducing or removing barriers**. A key part of this is addressing the policy, legislative and regulatory environment.

The policy and regulatory settings will enable Māori to make decisions about their lands and about land uses. Presently, some settings can be prohibitive or questionable but ideally they would enable an approach to forestry that facilitates Māori aspirations in forests and forestry. To achieve this balance appropriately, there needs to be greater **advocacy** of Māori voices and priorities in determining these

- Establishment of a Māori forestry paradigm that reflects the values and aspirations for Māori;
- Advocating a better policy and regulatory ecosystem for a Māori forestry paradigm based on multiple land uses and forest types, underpinned and embodied by the distinctly Māori values that underpin a Māori approach to forestry;
- Creating scale at a collective national level, potentially for targeted investment for targeted uplift of Māori land and forest owners; and exploring collective ventures similar to the Iwi Collective Partnership.

At the core is articulating and unpacking what a Māori forestry paradigm is and would look like; and how this would also operate. The Summit has provided an insight into the values that underpin this paradigm, and these are included in the causal loop. There is an opportunity to compare this (or a more developed version) alongside the current binary approach to forestry. While possible, Scion argues that it is better to work on an aspirational and strengths-based approach. That is to develop Māori aspirations more clearly and to pursue those. A comparative exercise would be a deficit approach, and this would be less valuable in our view.

AREA 1: State of Māori Forestry and Governance

This side of the diagram shows the dynamics and context of Māori governance. It highlights the impact that historical confiscation and land alienation has on the ability of Māori to be able to make decisions about land use. It also shows how decision-making is across often fragmented and overlapping structures that are more culturally-based (whānau, hapū and iwi) and those which are contemporary (trusts, incorporations and post-settlement governance entities).

An important aspect of considering forestry is the importance of **scale**, particularly in making forestry options viable. For governance, this is achieved through scaling upward through hapū to an iwi level where necessary; through post-Settlement governance entities; or purpose-built collaborations. This has been accomplished in other sectors (e.g. FOMA, ICP).

While considering scale, there are other potential methods to mitigate the need to create scale, such as *distributed systems* approaches.

Māori Aspirations

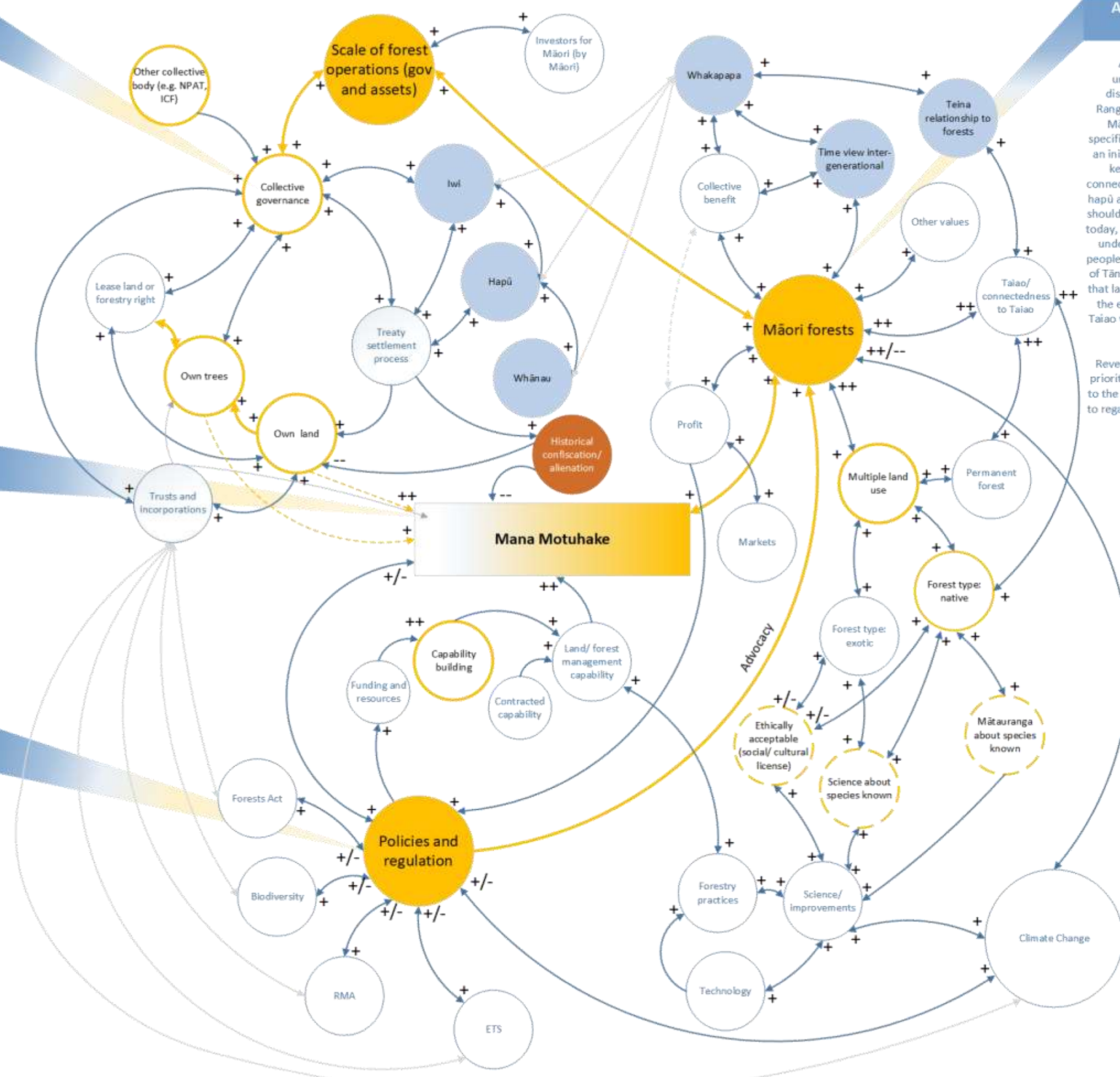
Mana motuhake represents the overarching aspiration of Māori for self-determination and having the ability to make decisions about things that matter to them (at the various levels of governance). At Ngā Kōrero Rangatira mō Ngā Hua Ngahere 2023, Māori expressed a desire to regain their land and control over their forests. For some, this was a pathway by utilising plantation forestry to transition to better economic independence in a journey to re-establish indigenous or mixed forests, or to enable a more Māori-values based approach in forests and forestry.

AREA 3: Enabling Environment

An enabling environment consists of **improving capacity and capabilities** and of **reducing or removing barriers**. A key part of this is addressing the policy, legislative and regulatory environment.

The policy and regulatory settings will enable Māori to make decisions about their lands and about land uses. Presently, some settings are prohibitive or questionable, meaning there needs to be greater **advocacy** of Māori voices and priorities in determining these settings. This includes settings for responsible use of indigenous species for productive purposes, appropriate consideration of Māori interests in credit systems to ensure just transitions and prevention of further harms on Māori.

The other space is **capability building** and improving owner capability to make decisions about their lands and forests.



AREA 2: A Māori Forestry Paradigm

A Māori Forestry Paradigm is underpinned by values that are distinctively Māori. At Ngā Kōrero Rangatira mō Ngā Hua Ngahere 2023, Māori highlighted values that are specifically Māori. This diagram provides an initial snapshot of these values. One key value was whakapapa which connected people to collectives (whānau, hapū and iwi), to future generations who should benefit from land use decisions of today, and to the environment. The latter underpins the teina relationship that people have to forests and other children of Tāne, and therefore the responsibility that land and forest owners have back to the environment. For this reason, the Taiao was seen as the bottom line rather than revenue.

Revenue continues to be in the mix of priorities as it enables benefits to return to the people, and is part of the pathway to regain mana motuhake over lands and forests.

The present forestry paradigm pushes us to consider forestry as production plantation forests – but this has become increasingly problematic. We need a new way.

A Māori perspective is more holistic and integrated and provides a distinct alternative.

The diagram presents this thinking around the current paradigm – in single purpose production forestry, but Māori aspire to something different – an approach that is more holistic, integrated and based on multiple uses. In time, with the implementation of such a new model, that the way these elements are arranged will change.