



State of Adaptation Practice in the Lower Mekong River Basin – A Call and Proposal for Action

3rd Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum
Panel 6.3. – Institutional Mechanisms for Linking Research and Policy

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Mekong River Basin Initiative – Objectives

- Undertake a ‘stock-take’ of climate change adaptation projects in the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB)
 - How many? What sectors and themes? Who are donors and implementors?
- Identify ‘successful’ projects and document them via case studies
 - Which projects have seemed to work and why?
- Assess challenges surrounding the state of adaptation practice
 - Where are the deficiencies and gaps?
- Suggest ways forward in accelerating climate change adaptation in the LMB
 - How to maximize synergies between actors and how to involve new actors?
 - How to create greater scale?
 - How to enhance governance of adaptation?

Mekong River Basin Initiative – Geography



The Mekong River Basin

Characteristics:

795,000 km² (21)

4,400 km (12)

3 (8)

Lower Mekong River Basin:

- Area of > 600,000 km²
- ~ 60 million population

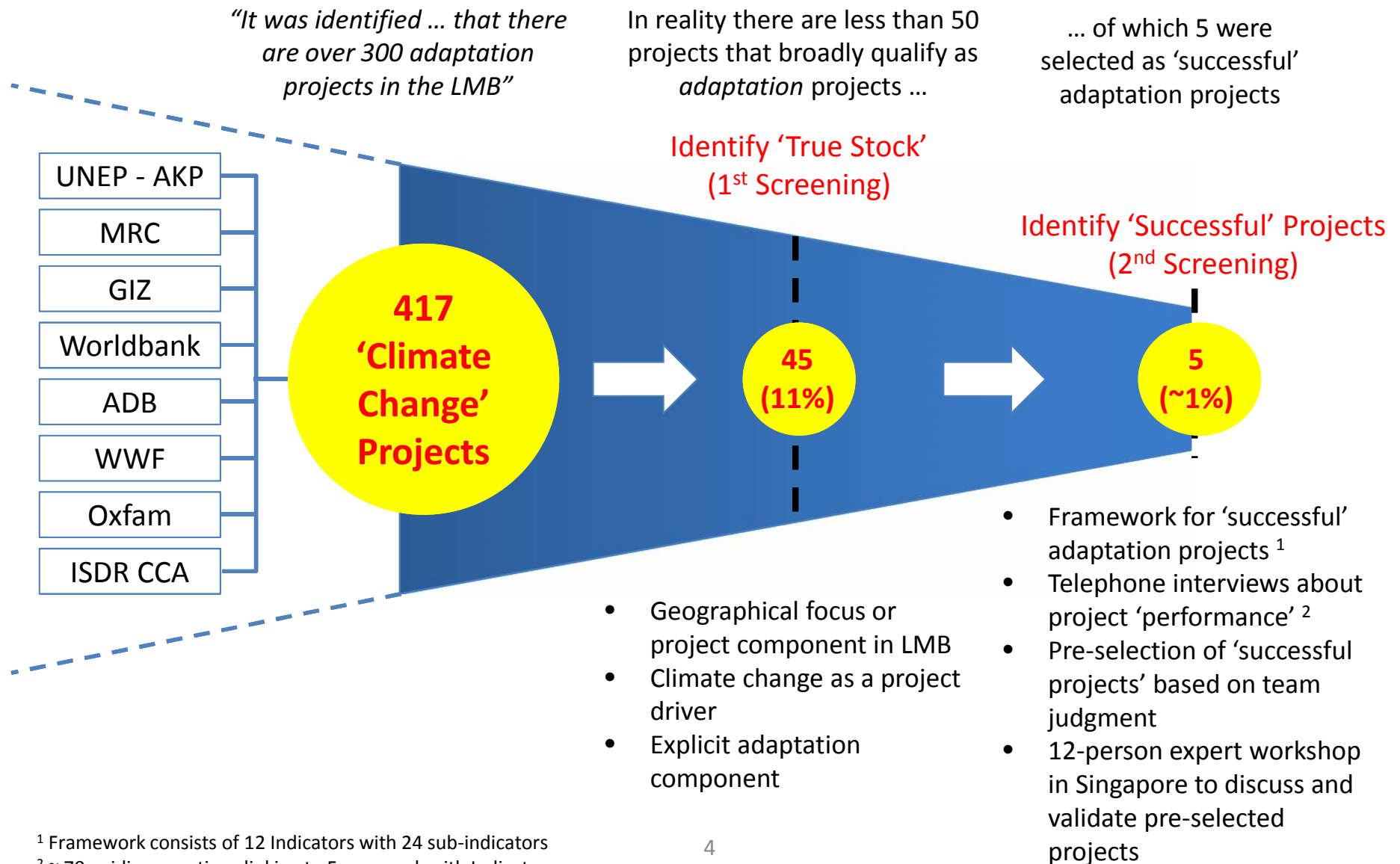
population heavily
and

fishery



- Across 4 riparian countries
fish exports ~ US\$ 5.6 bn

Project Screening Process



Shortlist of 'Successful' Projects

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|--|
| 1 | Earth Net Foundation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vulnerability assessment and capacity building for mong smallholder rice farmers in Northeast Thailand (Yasothon Province), to deal with rainfall variability and droughts |
| 2 | GIZ | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural resource management and ecosystem-based adaptation to deal with saltwater intrusion in the Kien Giang Biosphere Reserve, Mekong Delta, Vietnam |
| 3 | CSIRO | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bridging top-down and bottoms-up adaptation planning and practice by targeting household segments in rice-based communities in Cambodia and Laos |
| 4 | Oxfam Vietnam | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reducing vulnerability to coastal climate hazards and creation of a long-term adaptation strategy in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam (Ben Tre Province) |
| | UNDP | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mainstreaming regional climate change adaptation via demonstration of resilient practices in agriculture and water resource management in Cambodia |

Insights from 'Stock-Take' on Adaptation Practice in LMB = Call for “Transformational Change”

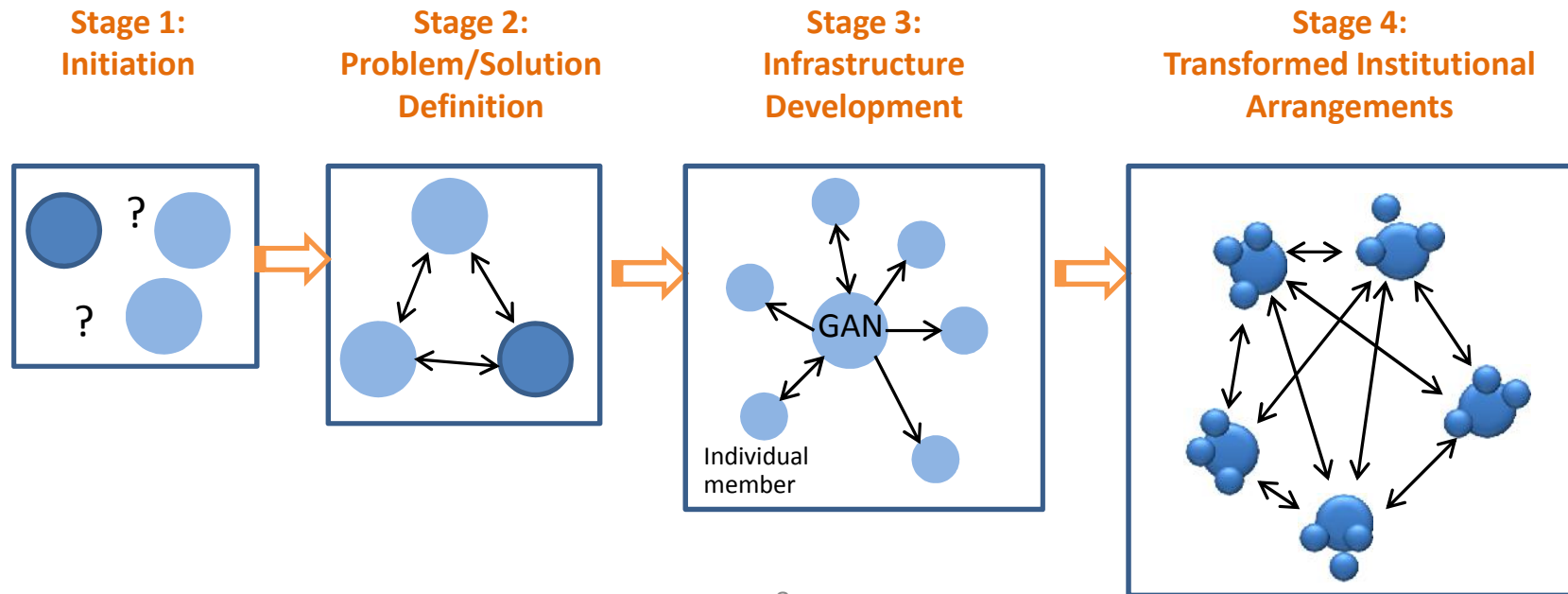
- **Lack of scale ... too few** 'adaptation' projects and funds
 - ✦ Only 45 adaptation projects (~11% of total) in a region with ~ 60 million people
- **Lack of scale ... very few programmatic efforts but dispersed individual projects**, driven by fragmented actors engaged in bottoms-up project-by-project activities
 - ✦ ~90% of projects with single country focus with scope to enhance management of transboundary issues
- **Reactive rather than proactive adaptation practice**
 - ✦ Typically 'adaptation' projects developed in response to extreme weather events and lack of forward looking strategic and anticipatory elements
- **Dominance of agriculture**
 - ✦ ~75% of projects with focus on agriculture and rural communities
- **Absence of private sector in adaptation practice**
 - ✦ Only 1 adaptation project with significant private sector role
- **Low level of co-ordination** across funding and implementation agencies
 - ✦ Lost synergies and risks of mal-adaptation

Proposal for a Possible Way Forward: Regional Adaptation Action Network for the LMB

- “*Transformational Change*” via re-defined institutional arrangements in the form of a legitimate multi-stakeholder action network in which senior decision makers representing policy, business, NGO’s and researchers convene under a set of guiding principles, including ...
 - Suspension of existing power relationships
 - ‘Formal’ collaboration via the action network platform for a time-bound period
 - Use of transformative scenarios as a tool to create adaptation action momentum
 - Tackling immediate tangible as well as long term policy oriented adaptation issues
 - Agnostic about the specific outcomes of the collaboration
 - Facilitated by a neutral secretariat without a political agenda
- Rationale for LMB-wide approach:
 - Adaptation-focused institutional arrangement aims to complement, not substitute national level policy planning
 - Similarities in socio-economic profile, climate risks and vulnerabilities across the four riparian countries
 - Similarities in state of adaptation practices and challenges in adaptation governance across the four riparian countries

Theory of Global Action Network (GAN)

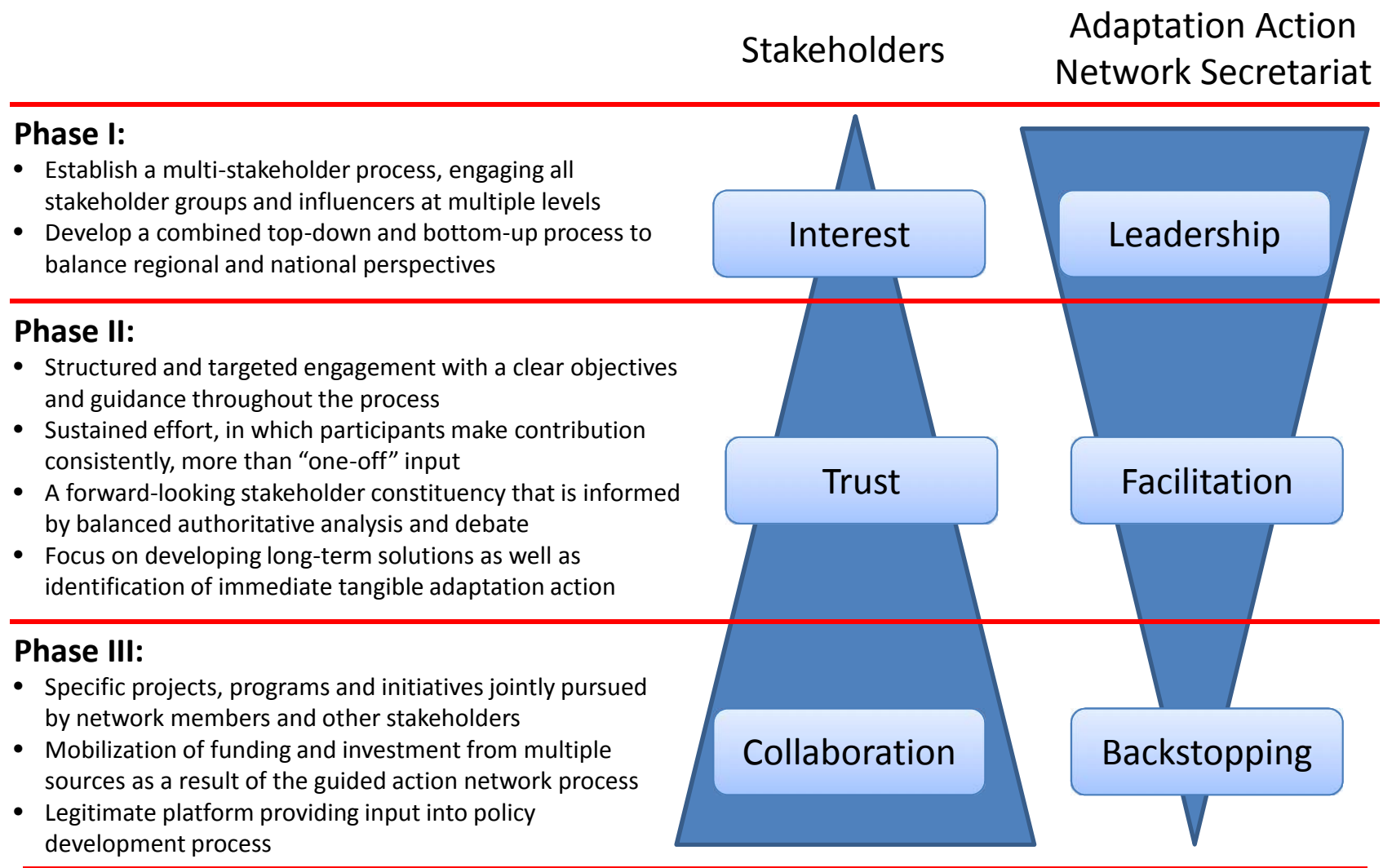
- GANs are civil society initiated multi-stakeholder arrangements that aim to fulfill a leadership role in order to protect global public commons or goods through a *network of organizations rather than relying on governance via a single regulating stakeholder alone*
- Development stages of a GAN:



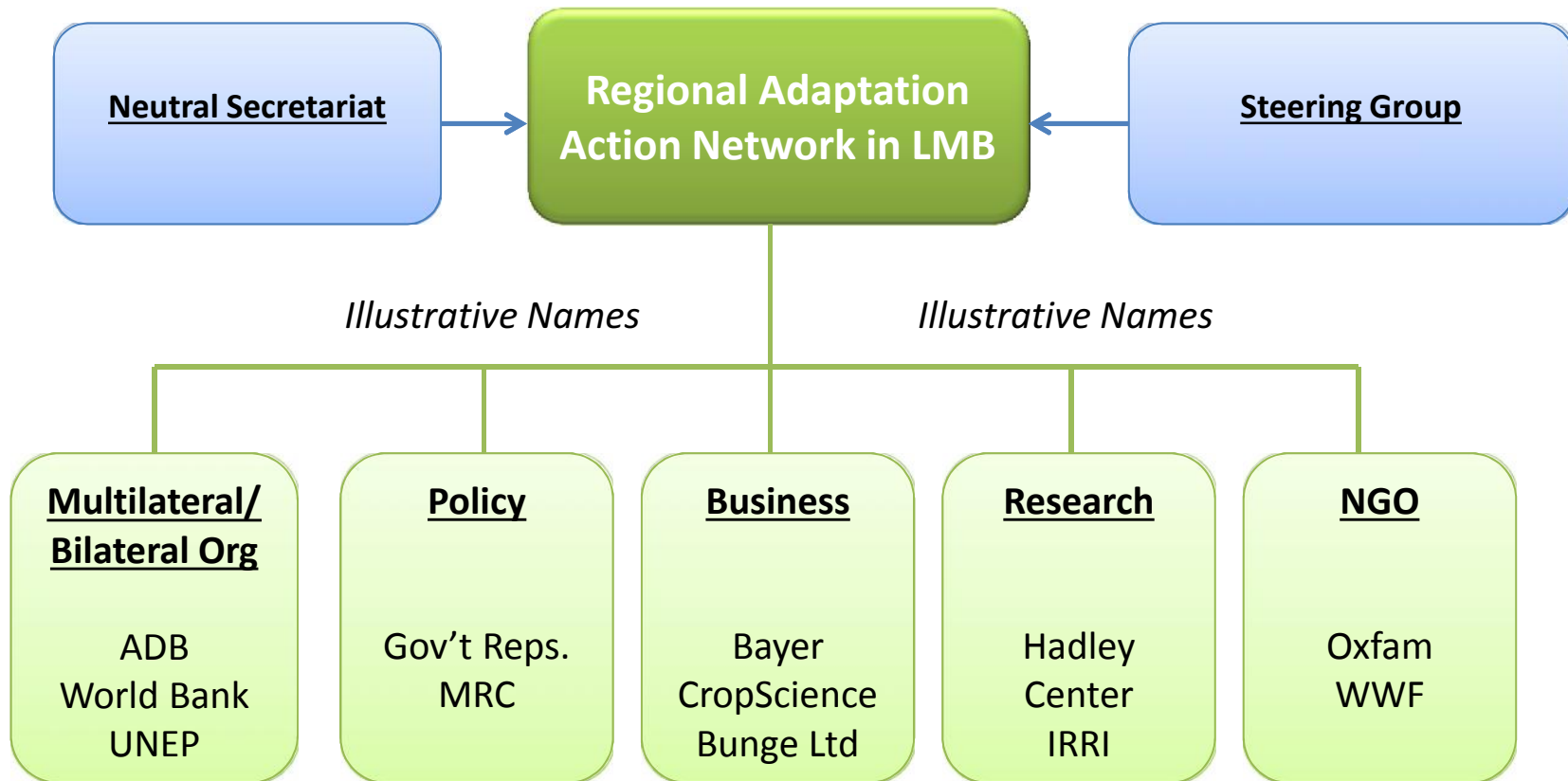
Examples of Successful GANs

GAN	Objective	Participants	Outcome
GAVI: Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization	Saving children's lives and protecting people's health by increasing access to immunization in poor countries	WHO, UNICEF, World Bank, B&MGF, Pharmaceutical Industry, Governments, Civil Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "There is strong evidence that GAVI's flagship program has accelerated countries' introduction of life saving vaccines and immunisation outcomes - which might not have happened in its absence." (2nd Evaluation Report) • 325 mn additional children vaccinated by 2011
GAIN: Global Alliance for improved nutrition	To reduce malnutrition through sustainable strategies aimed at improving the health and nutrition of populations at risk	Business, Government, NGO, Academia, UN, World Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 610 million individuals consuming fortified food (Results Report 2010-2011)

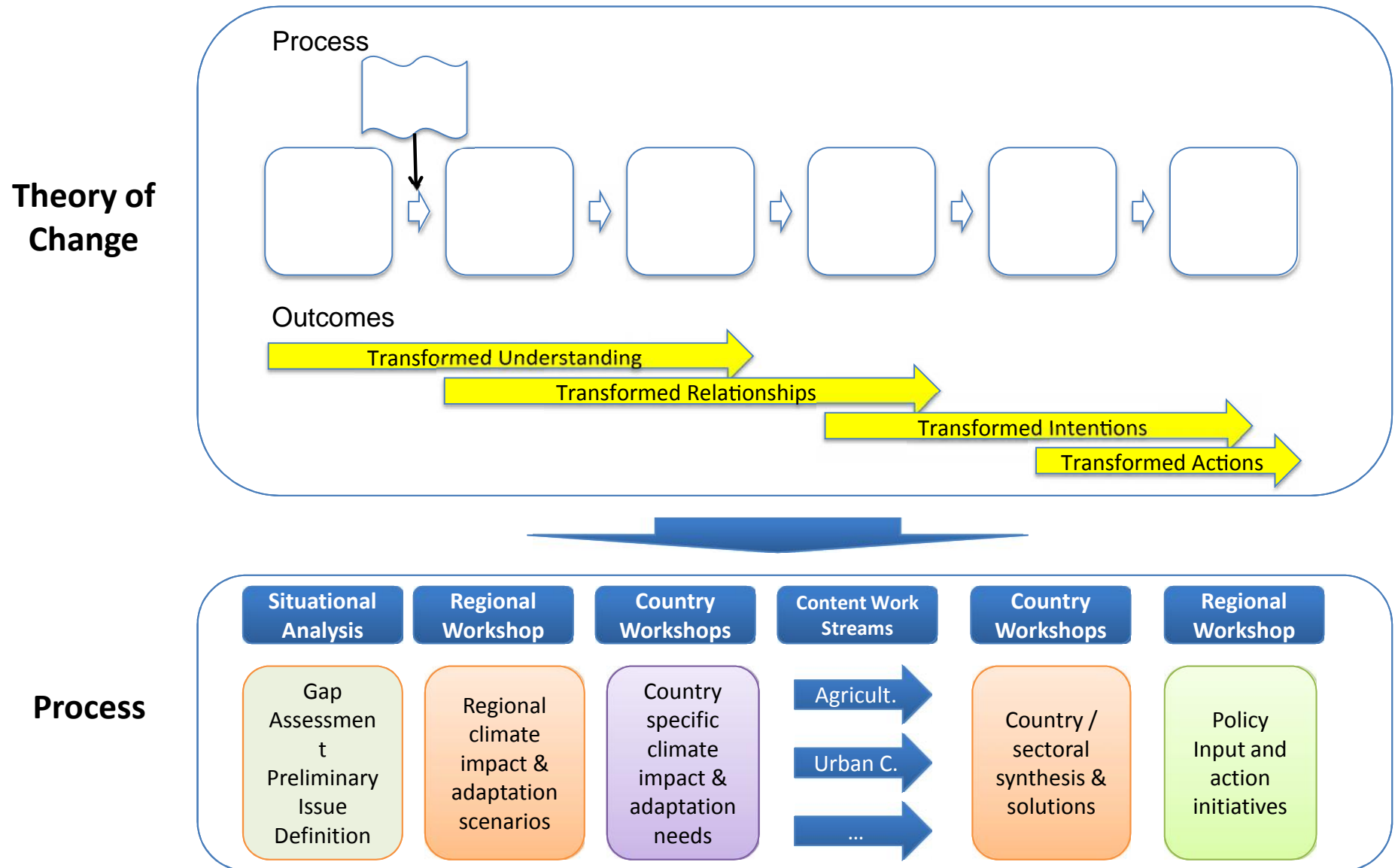
Model for Achieving Collective Action in the LMB



Leadership Phase – Illustrative Multi-Stakeholder Set-Up



Facilitation Phase – Underlying Theory of Change + Proposed Process



Conclusion

- State-of-Adaptation Practice in LMB calls for transformative change in order to mainstream adaptation and to overcome apparent polarities
 - Reactive vs. proactive adaptation
 - Policy-dominated vs. business-inclusive
 - Small-scale one-off projects vs. large-scale programs with synergies
 - Fragmented activity vs. coordinated action
 - Top-down planning vs. bottoms-up grassroots projects
- Re-defined and strengthened institutional arrangements via a legitimate Regional Action Network might offer a mechanism for overcoming these polarities and act as a bridge to accelerate adaptation mainstreaming

Thanks!

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Detailed Project Evaluation Framework (used in the 2nd Screening)

New Framework Development with Practitioners



Project Input Indicators:

- Gap Assessment
- Project Governance
- Project Resources
- Integration

Project Performance Indicators:

- Effectiveness
- Efficiency

Project Output Indicators:

- Impact
- Sustainability
- Replicability
- Scalability
- Outcome integration
- Equity and legitimacy

- **12 indicators**
- **24 sub-indicators**
- **~ 70 guiding questions**

Framework Details for Adaptation Project ‘Inputs’

Indicator	Sub-indicator	Key Questions to be Addressed
Gap Assessment (Input)	Scope, Timing and Data Basis	Was a vulnerability or gap assessment conducted? What was the scope of the assessment and when was it undertaken? What ‘scientific’ or other data were used as inputs? Were risks quantified and if so how?
	Process	Who was undertaking the gap assessment? What process or method was used for the assessment?
	Stakeholder Integration	Which stakeholders were involved in the assessment and/or briefed about the outcomes?
Project Integration (Input)	Existing Plans	Was the project plan integrated or linked with existing plans for the community/region/country (e.g. economic development plans, disaster risk reduction plans, capacity development plans)? What were the linkages to existing plans?
	Other Projects or Initiatives	What learnings from other adaptation projects/initiatives were used as project inputs? Did the adaptation project have any links to other projects or initiatives in the country/region? If so, what were those linkages (e.g. shares personnel, joint metrics or reportings, etc.)?
Project Objectives (Input)	Objective Setting	What were the explicit objectives in the project? How were these objectives defined?
Project Resources (Input)	Resource Basis	What were the project resources in terms of funding/budget, staffing and skills? Was the resource base adequate? Who was in charge of approving project budgets? How was the funding structured?
Project Governance (Input)	Project Workplan and milestones	Was a project workplan agreed upon before project start with all key stakeholders? Who developed the workplan? Were common milestones defined?
	Roles and Responsibilities	What key roles and responsibilities were defined in the project? Who was in charge of overall project management?

Case Study:

Yasothon Province, Thailand

- Project located in Yasothon province, NE Thailand
 - Key challenges for rainfed rice farmers: rains arriving and ending later, rain with higher intensity, prolonged droughts
- Project objectives:
 - To build coping capacity for smallholder farmers
- Adaptive measures
 - Microcredit provision for water infrastructure investment
 - Livelihood diversification: local crops, multi-purpose trees as medicine etc. to diversify 'cash risk' for farmers
 - Market access for surplus production based on fair-trade principles



Project Inputs/design features:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Gap assessment combines input from PRECIS model and other scientific findings and perceived climate change risks2. Provision of loans as financial support for project households
Project process features:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Participation of farmers in every stage of the project resulted in the acquire of new knowledge and sharing and learning together.2. M&E framework was designed and implemented to ensure project effectiveness and efficiency.
Project output/impact features:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Farmers have the capacity for long-term use of new own water – management systems.