Mainstreaming adaptation in development

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Outline

- ☐ Adaptation

- ☐ Mainstreaming adaptation

- ☐ Linking knowledge and action

- ☐ Governing adaptation

Inevitably this is a personal view

What is *adaptation*?

☐ Responding to impacts (on A from B)

☐ Reducing vulnerability (of A to B)

 ■ Managing risks

 ■ Modify underlying factors

☐ Building adaptive capacity (of A to setC)

 ■ Managing resilience

 ■ Innovating to transform

"*Without better resilience our vulnerability will grow exponentially*" (Achim Steiner)
"*Building resilience is key to responding to climate change*" (Scheafer-Preuss)
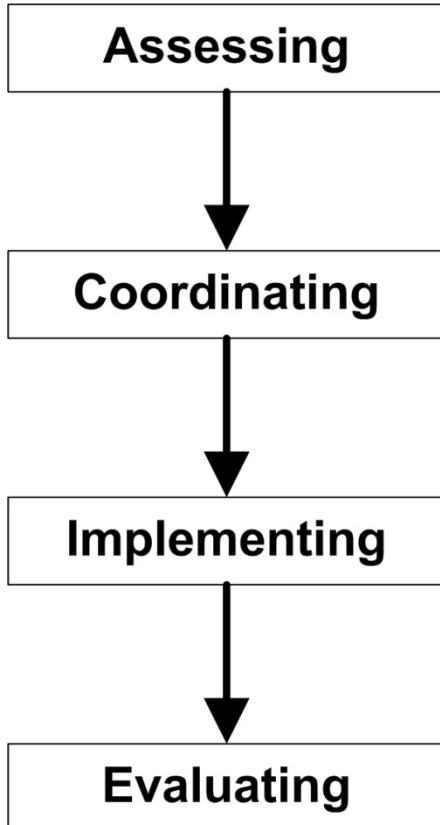
What is *mainstreaming*?

- ☐ A planning approach
- ☐ A policy discourse
- ☐ A panacea

"Adaptation is sustainable development done well in a changing climate context..
Adaptation is an opportunity for better development, not just an admission of failure".(Peter King)

A planning approach

Planning

Mainstreaming intervention points

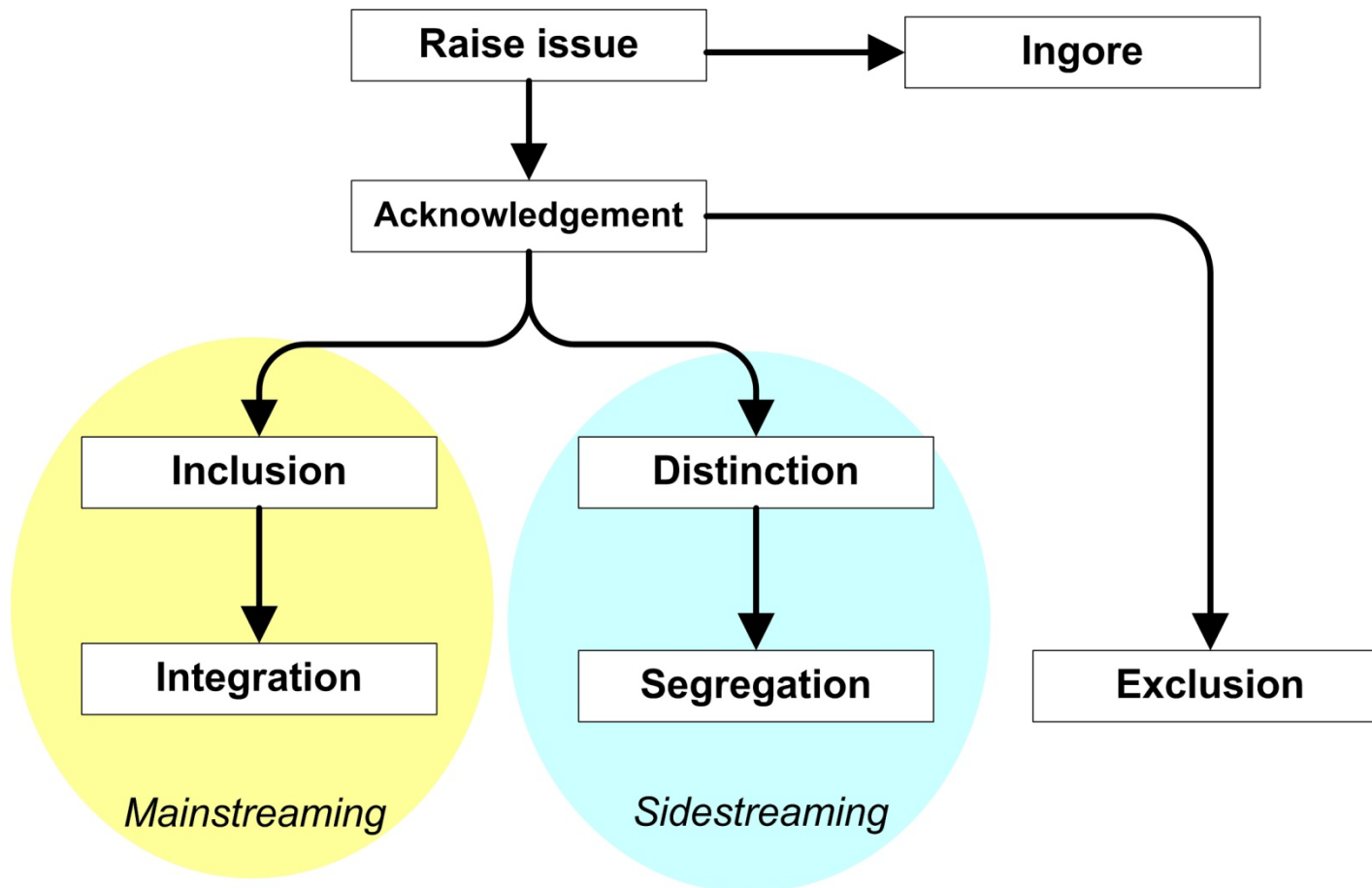|	
Assessing	How should we integrate adaptation into planning?
↓	
Coordinating	Who is responsible where for taking into account adaptation?
↓	
Implementing	How should adaptation be incorporated in actions?
↓	
Evaluating	Were adaptation actions effective? Was resilience increased, adaptive capacity built?

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A policy discourse

- Powerful because it sounds reasonable – way of getting issue on the agenda
- But as a successful label…
  - can serve varied purposes and agendas
  - hide complexity of options and decisions which may require deliberation and negotiation
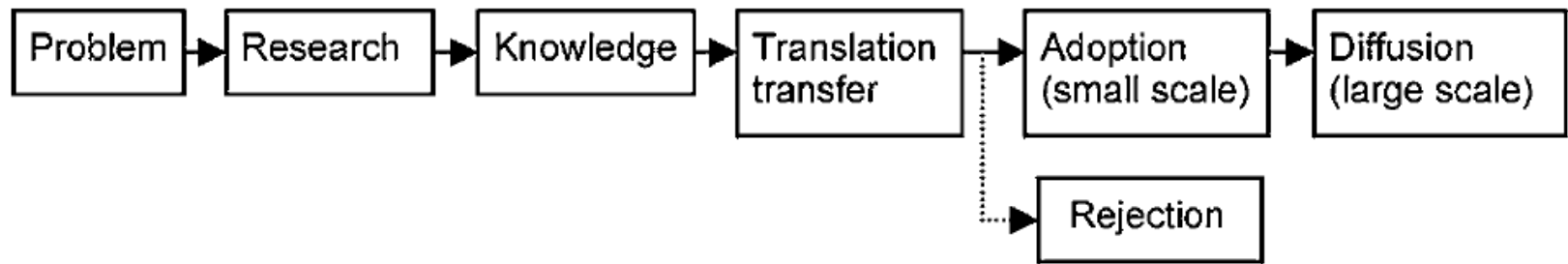 - device for invisibility and inaction

"Adaptation…can be used to meet the development needs of our countries" (*Virachai Virameteekul*)
"Climate change is the defining challenge of our times"(Young Woo-Park)

A panacea

What makes knowledge systems effective?

☐ Use tools and strategies to handle decision-making with large uncertainties

☐ Manage boundary functions

☐ Emphasize co-production of knowledge

"The end-of-pipe linear-transfer model of technology transfer is not an adequate for thinking about adaptation knowledge"

Accept uncertainties

- Large uncertainties often considered as hindering adaptation responses

- Uncertainties about future climate and their impacts might increase over time not fall as many wish

- Need new policy-making and investment strategies

"We are going to have to do better at making decisions under uncertainty".(Panelist)

Strategies to cope with uncertainty

- ☐ **No-regret** – yield benefits even in absence of change

- ☐ **Reversible and flexible** – reduce costs of being wrong

- ☐ **Safety margin** – reduce vulnerabilities at low cost

- ☐ **Soft** – institutional or financial tools rather than technologies and infrastructure

- ☐ **Reduce decision-making time horizons** – avoid long-term commitment (upgradeable)
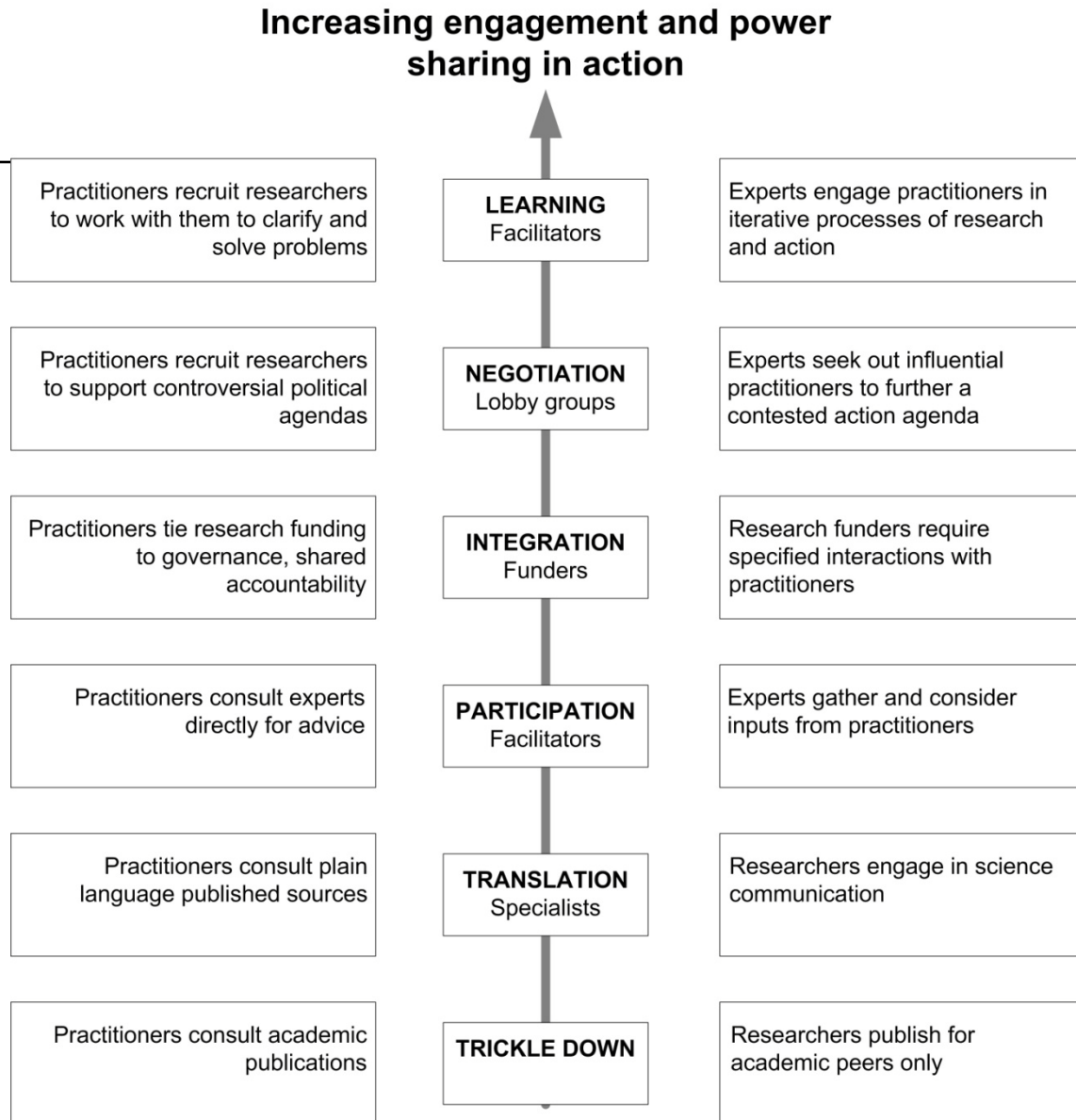
Manage boundary functions

- ☐ Invest in translation, mediation and facilitation

- ☐ Foster two-way communication

- ☐ Jointly deliberate and define agendas

- ☐ Encourage key individuals to shift roles

- ☐ Establish dual accountability of intermediary organizations

Co-produce knowledge

- ☐ Abandon end-of-pipe linear-transfer models

- ☐ Recognize diverse sources of knowledge

- ☐ Share 'power' and authority

van Kerkhoff & Lebel 2006

Increasing engagement and power sharing in action

Practitioners recruit researchers to work with them to clarify and solve problems	**LEARNING** Facilitators	Experts engage practitioners in iterative processes of research and action
Practitioners recruit researchers to support controversial political agendas	**NEGOTIATION** Lobby groups	Experts seek out influential practitioners to further a contested action agenda
Practitioners tie research funding to governance, shared accountability	**INTEGRATION** Funders	Research funders require specified interactions with practitioners
Practitioners consult experts directly for advice	**PARTICIPATION** Facilitators	Experts gather and consider inputs from practitioners
Practitioners consult plain language published sources	**TRANSLATION** Specialists	Researchers engage in science communication
Practitioners consult academic publications	**TRICKLE DOWN**	Researchers publish for academic peers only

How should adaptation be governed?

- **Decision-making processes:**
  - Who decides among adaptation options and trade-offs between sectors, livelihoods or places? Are these processes legitimate and fair?

- **Financing and accountability:**
  - Who should pay for adaptation? Who is accountable for adaptation actions and non-actions?

- **Contributions to social justice:**
  - Are adaptation strategies, policies and projects furthering social justice?
  - Are women empowered by current adaptation initiatives?

- **Learning from experiences with normal development:**
  - Which current processes of development making people more vulnerable and ecosystems less resilient to climate change?

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Conclusions

- The notion of 'mainstreaming' adaptation in development is not a panacea. Issue details and institutional contexts matter a lot for implementation.

- We still have not done enough to link knowledge and action on adaptation. Who is engaged and how is critical to social learning.

- Adaptation is not just a technical problem, it is also a social and political process. How it is governed is crucial to its fairness.

Thank you