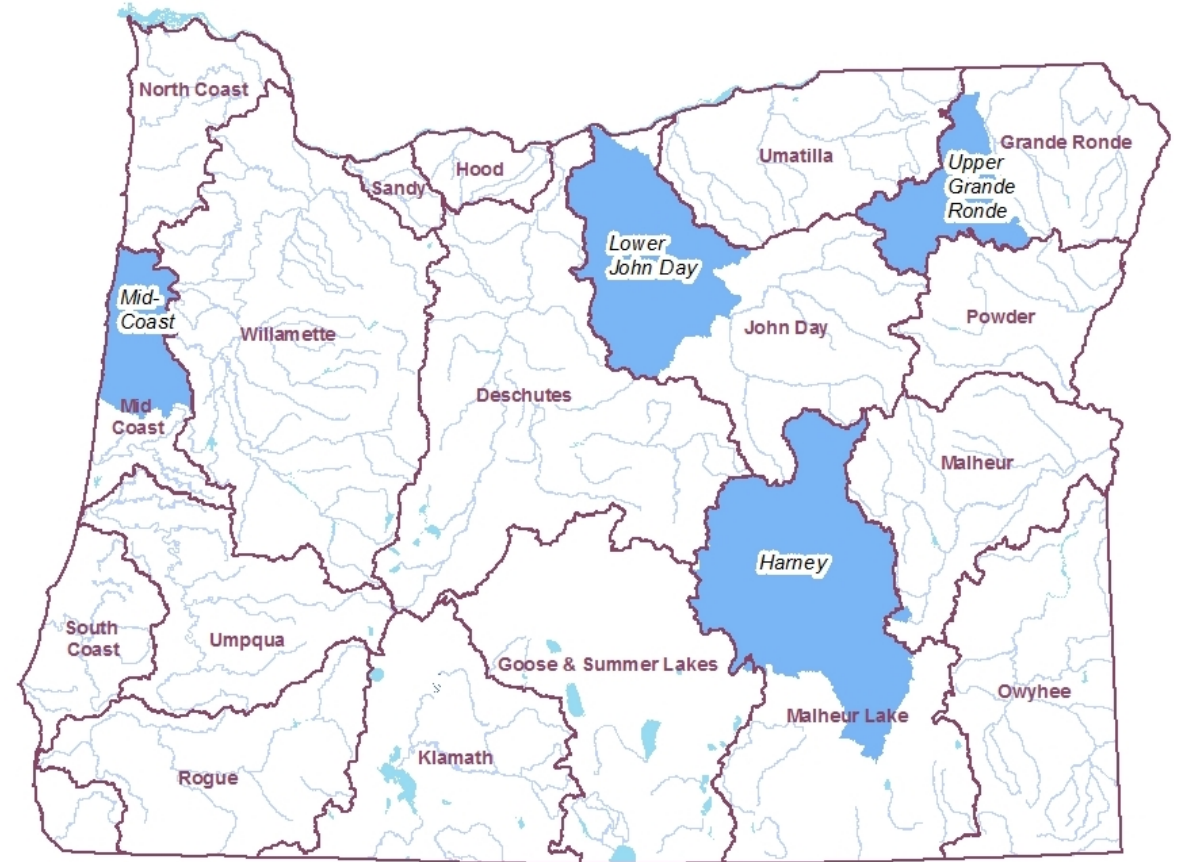


Place Based Collaborative Planning: A Participatory Evaluation

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Emily Jane Davis and Jess Downey

March 18, 2022



Why Place-Based Planning? A Brief Reminder of its Origins*

- “Because every river basin in Oregon is unique with widely varying ecological issues, community values, and economic dynamics, place-based integrated water resources planning is vital to meeting Oregon’s water management challenges.
- Such planning enables communities to engage in a collaborative process to determine how best to meet their unique instream and out-of-stream water needs.
- Place-based efforts provide a venue for water managers to interact with the people who live, work, and play in a watershed and care deeply about it.
- Place-based planning allows these conversations to take place at a scale that a statewide strategy may not be able to achieve. Voluntary place-based plans can “roll up” and inform the statewide Strategy.”

*Source: Oregon’s Integrated Water Strategy. 2012. P. 81.

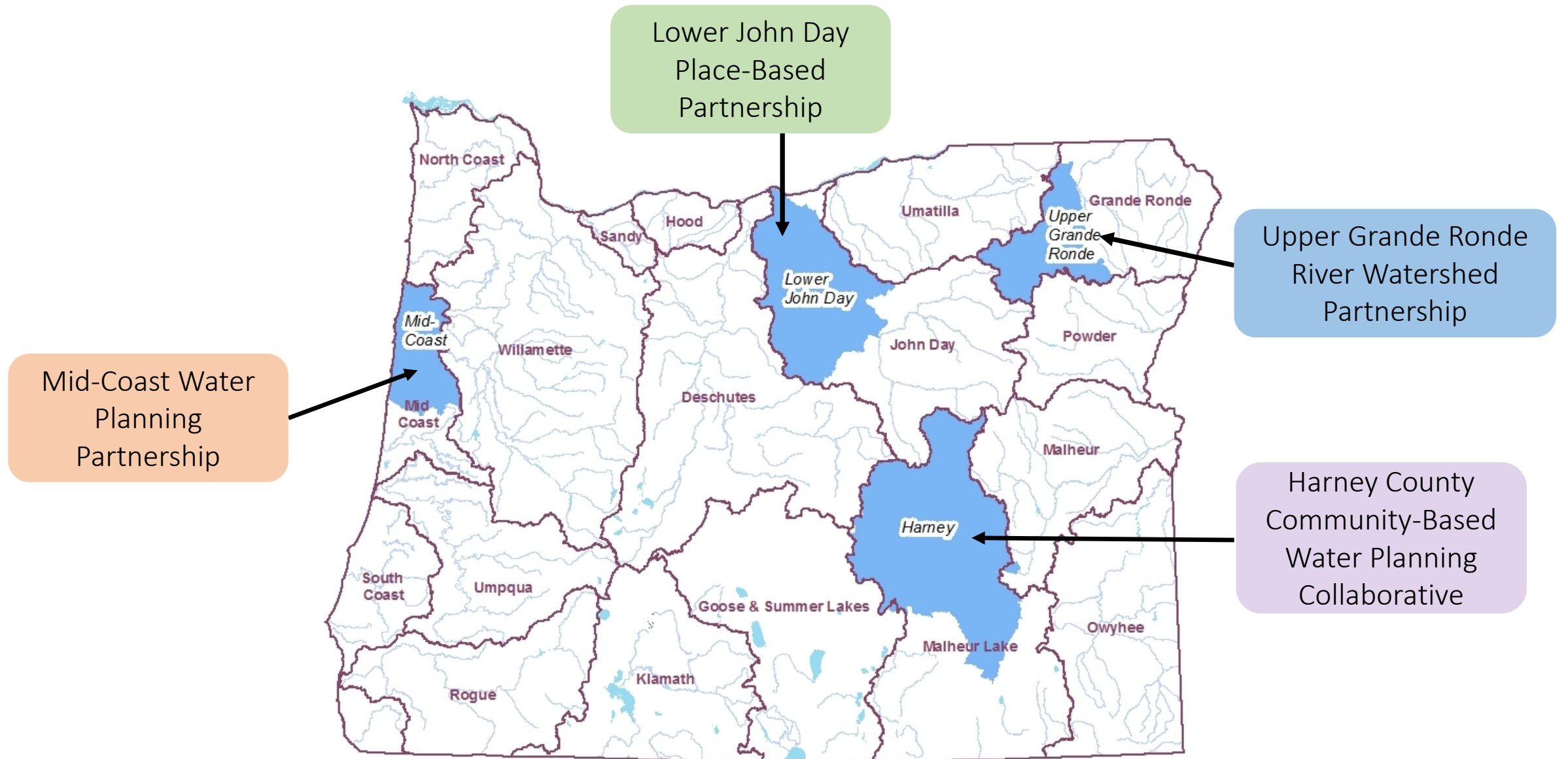
Place-Based Planning: Purpose and Principles

Place-based plans must:

- Be developed in collaboration with a balanced representation of interests;
- Balance current and future in-stream and out-of-stream needs;
- Include the development of actions that are consistent with the existing state laws concerning the water resources of this state and state water resources policy;
- Facilitate implementation of local solutions;
- Be developed utilizing an open and transparent process that fosters public participation; and
- Be developed in consultation with the [Oregon Water Resources] department.

*Senate Bill 266. 78th Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2015 Regular Session.

Pilot Place-Based Planning Groups



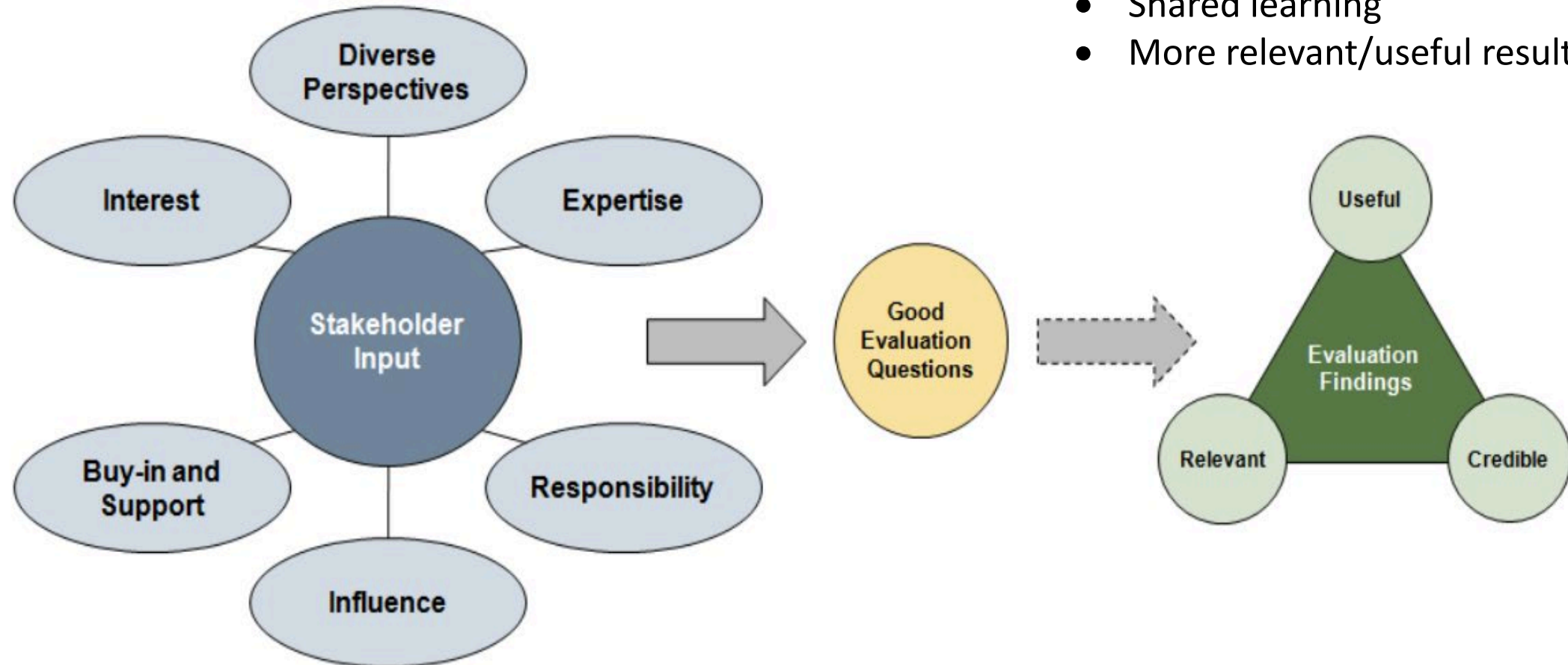
Lower John Day
Place-Based
Partnership

Upper Grande Ronde
River Watershed
Partnership

Mid-Coast Water
Planning
Partnership

Harney County
Community-Based
Water Planning
Collaborative

What is participatory evaluation?



- Diversity of perspectives/interests
- Shared learning
- More relevant/useful results

Participatory Evaluation

- Is a reflection process that emphasizes learning rather than judging
- Purpose: Identify areas where need to improve so can work on fixing them
- Looks at process as well as outcomes
- Can build participatory evaluation into programs – adaptive management

Guiding Questions

- How did the program work?
- In what ways did it work well?
- In what ways did it work less well?
- What can we do to improve it?

Participatory Evaluation Activities and Timeline

Document review: agency guidance, updates, memos, meeting minutes, step reports, plans, progress reports, etc.

Summer/
Spring
2021

- Scoping
- Design Workshops

25 people representing a range of water interests contributed to evaluation design

Fall 2021

Planning
Group
Workshops

47 people representing a range of water interests participated in the evaluation

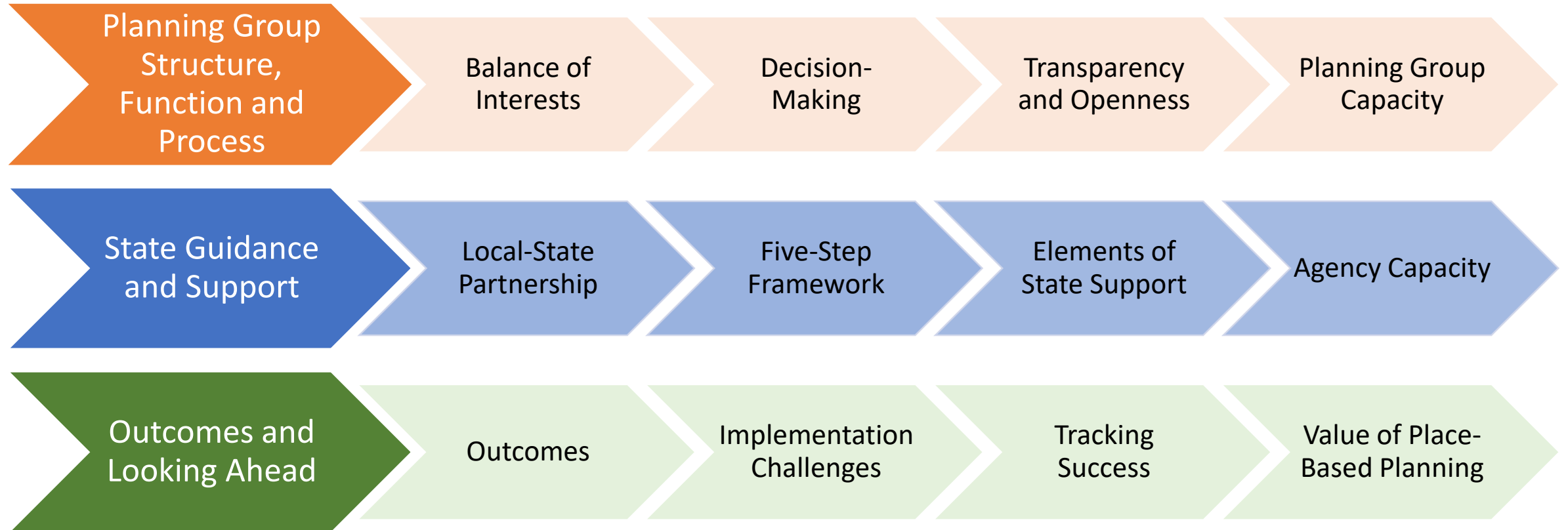
Winter
2022

- State Agency Workshop
- Online Survey
- Findings

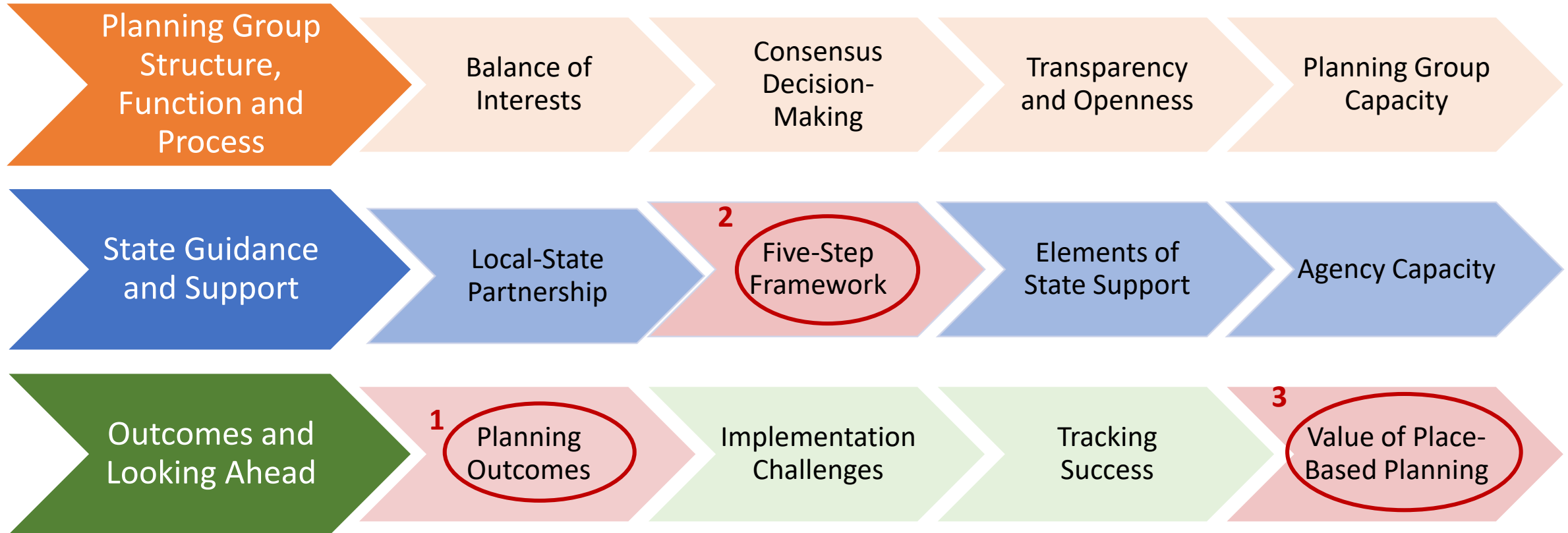
22 people representing state agencies participated in the evaluation

35 people representing a range of water interests completed the survey

Evaluation Topics



Evaluation Topics

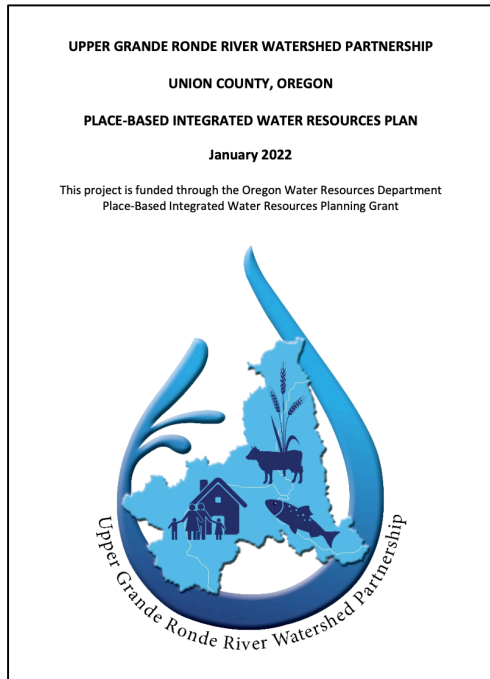


1) Planning Outcomes

2) Five-Step Framework

3) Value of Place-Based Planning

Outcomes of Place-Based Planning

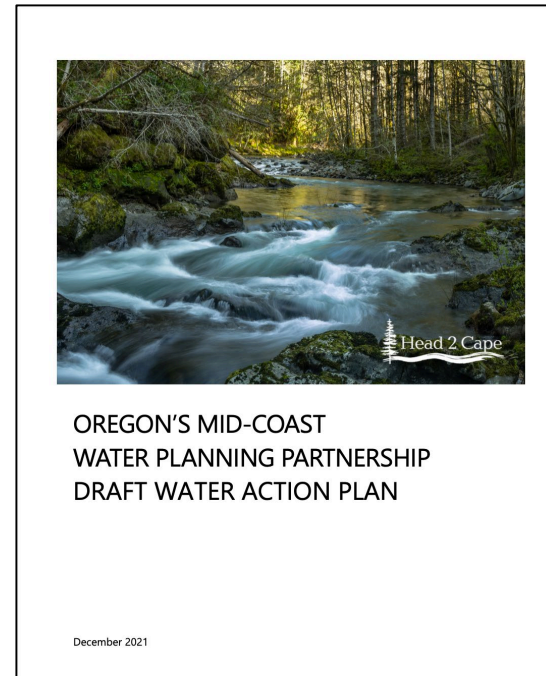
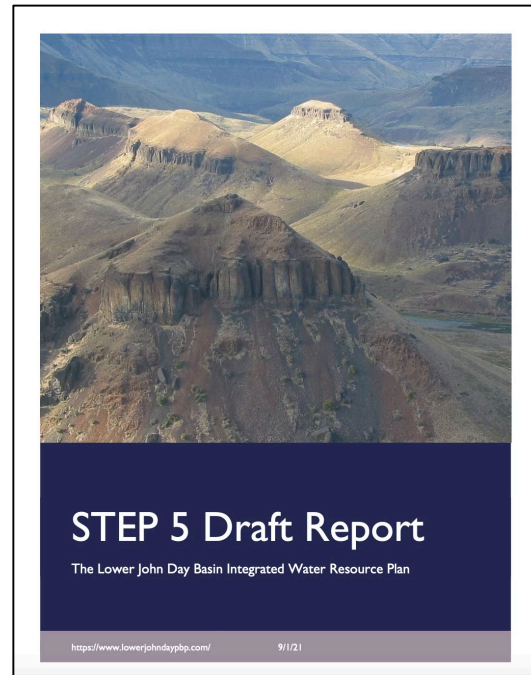


Brought together diverse water interests that previously had not worked together

Gained local support and buy-in for implementation

Developed pathways forward to achieve water resources goals

Leveraged funding for implementation of action plans

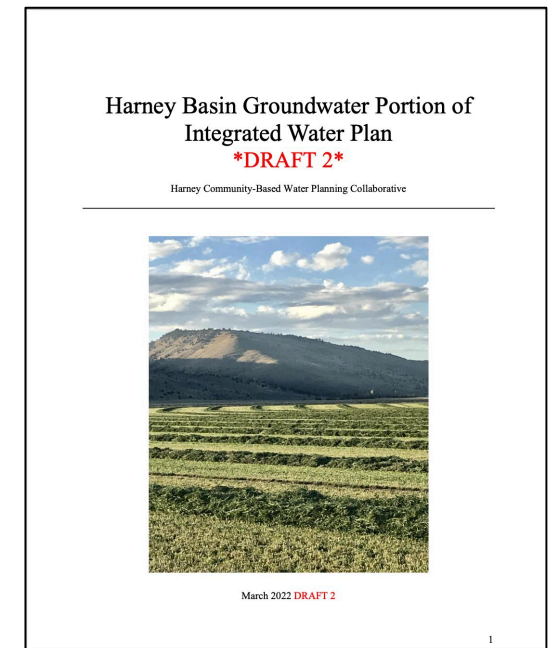


Identified data gaps that need to be filled

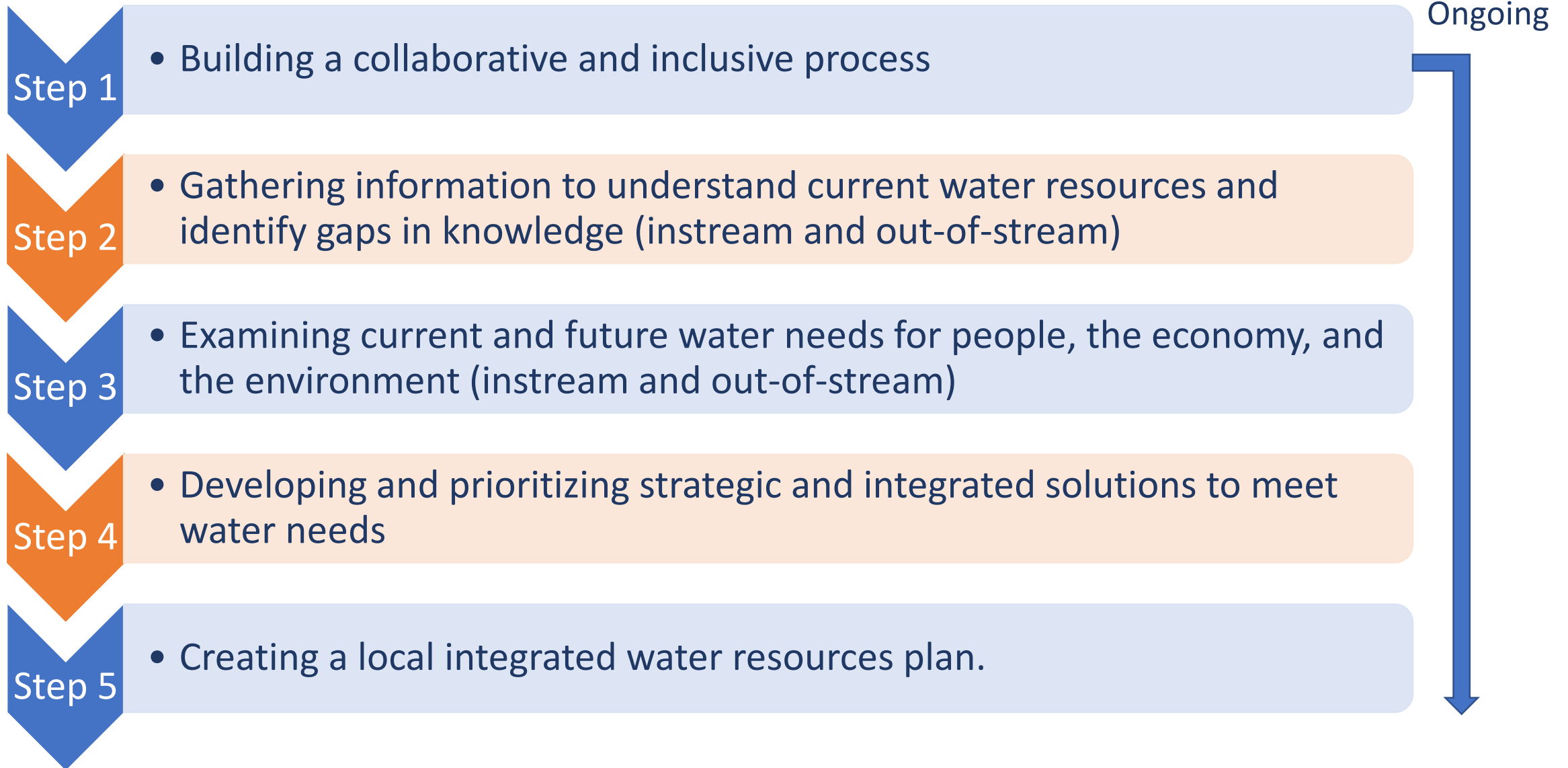
Collected data to fill some key data gaps

Created a broad network of individuals and groups knowledgeable and active in water planning

Improved agency understandings of local needs and local understanding of agency constraints



The Five-Step Framework: The Core of the Pilot Place-Based Planning Program

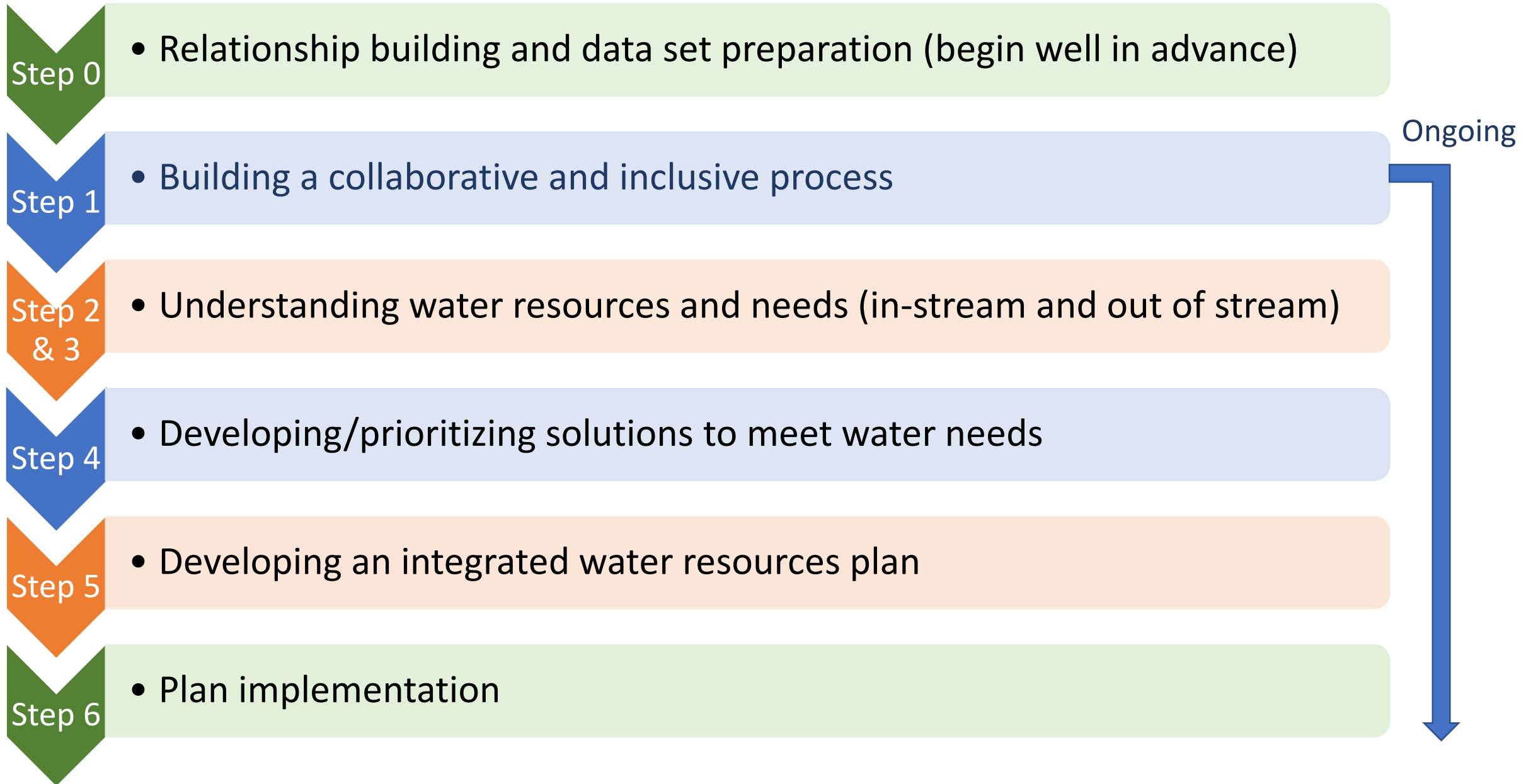


Challenges Associated With The Five-Step Framework

- Initial guidelines vague*
- High levels of distrust in some areas
- Achieving a balance of interests is hard – need for training on how to do this
- Consensus decision-making is challenging – need for skilled facilitators
- Step 2 (water supply) and Step 3 (water needs) took too long to complete
 - Key data unavailable, difficult to locate, or challenging to analyze
 - Skepticism in some areas about data provided by State agencies
- Step 4 – challenges with prioritization – need for decision support assistance
- Step 5 – Lack of clarity about State’s expectations – need for clear sideboards
- Need for implementation guidance

*The guidelines were initially intentionally left vague to provide flexibility for planning groups

Proposed Revisions to Step Framework



Is Place-Based Planning A Good Approach to Water Planning?

Enthusiasts

“Place-based planning is a great start. This is the first step to making a collaborative, cooperative community approach to a pretty serious issue. Everyone has different opinions and viewpoints. Not everyone will agree. The first part is getting to the table. It’s a great first step in the right direction.”

Qualified Success

“DEQ concluded that place-based planning is an effective approach or “tool” to implement the Integrated Water Resources Strategy. However, the State and planning partnerships must recognize early on the potential complexity and scale-dependency of the approach.”

Skeptics

“Place-based planning can help address some of the shortages in instream and out-of-stream use. But this work won’t have much impact on them due to regulatory processes needing reform.”



Spectrum of Perspectives on Place-Based Planning

Key Lessons Learned

Place-based integrated water planning is a useful tool for water resources management, but it is not appropriate for every place or every situation.

- Clarify what water planning in a prospective project area is meant to accomplish.
- Explore a suite of place-based or other approaches and select an approach that is appropriate for achieving the desired objectives.
 - For example, project areas with existing water challenges, such as the groundwater crisis in the Harney Basin, will need a different place-based approach than areas with little or no current water resources challenges.

Key Lessons Learned

Place-based integrated water planning is complex. The skills and capacities within the local planning group need to align with place-based integrated water planning needs.

- At a minimum, the skills required to do this type of planning include project management, community engagement, facilitation, water scientist(s), ecologist and/or biologist, and technical plan writer with a knowledge of water issues.
- Identify the blend of skills needed for each planning area.
- When a planning group is established, select participants with the types of skills needed to accomplish the work, in addition to selecting for a balance of interests.

Key Lessons Learned

A situational assessment of prospective place-based planning areas needs to be done to scope out the prospective planning area's water situation as well as its collaborative and technical capacity. Foundational work prior to planning would include, at a minimum:

- Building trust relationships between the State agencies and communities in the planning area
- Identifying strategies for filling gaps in local and State core competencies
- Developing data and analyses tailored to the planning area's needs
- Developing context-appropriate planning guidance
- Creating training materials tailored to fill gaps in local and state capacity or knowledge/skill sets.

Key Lessons Learned

Steady and adequate levels of State funding for both local planning groups and the core State agencies are critical.

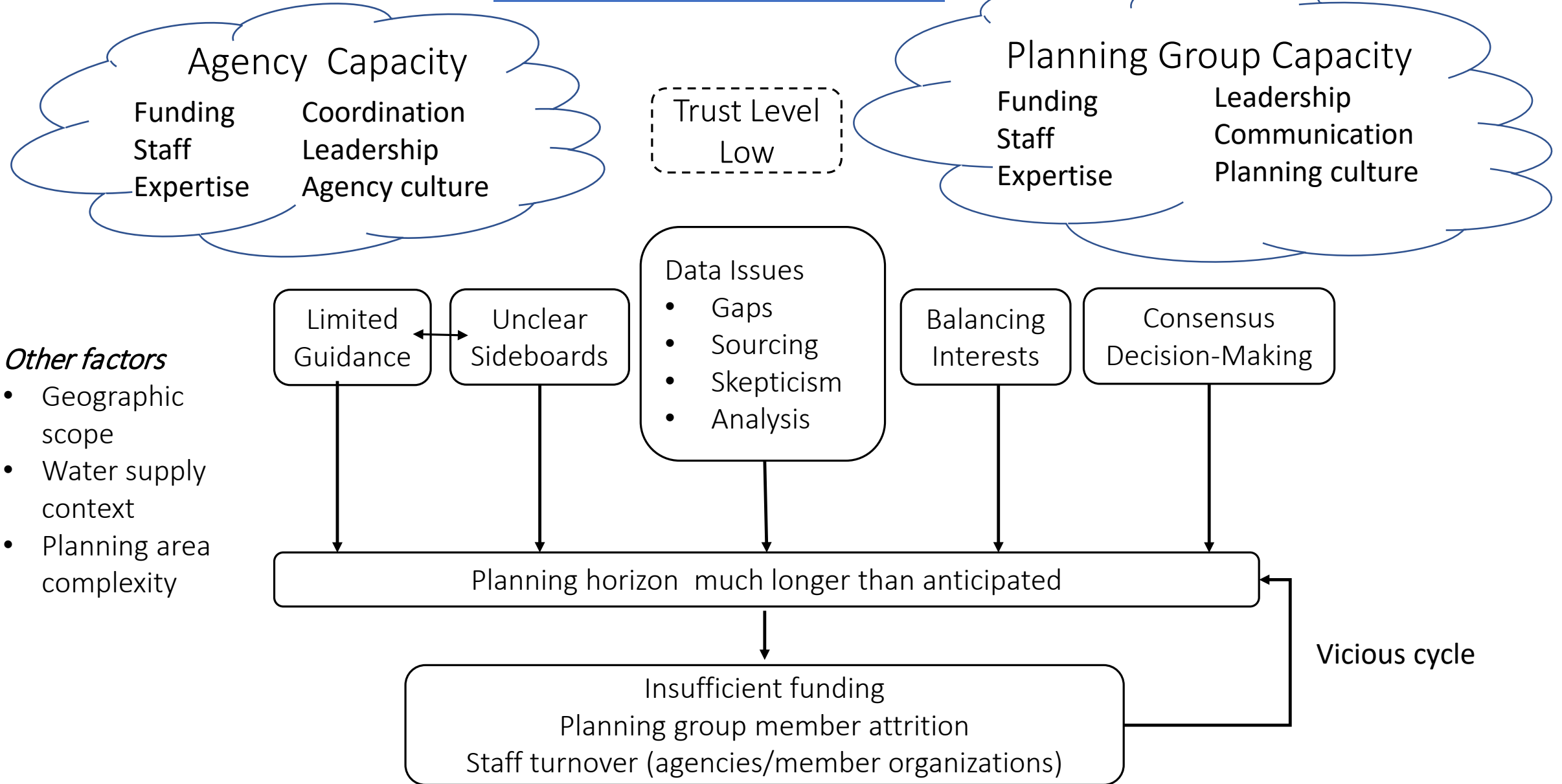
- Funding for planning groups to hire staff or consultants to carry out core activities such as project management, planning group coordination, facilitation, and technical report writing
- Higher levels of funding for OWRD, ODEQ, ODFW, and ODA will enable them to respond more quickly to requests for technical assistance and will allow them to be more engaged as members of the planning groups.

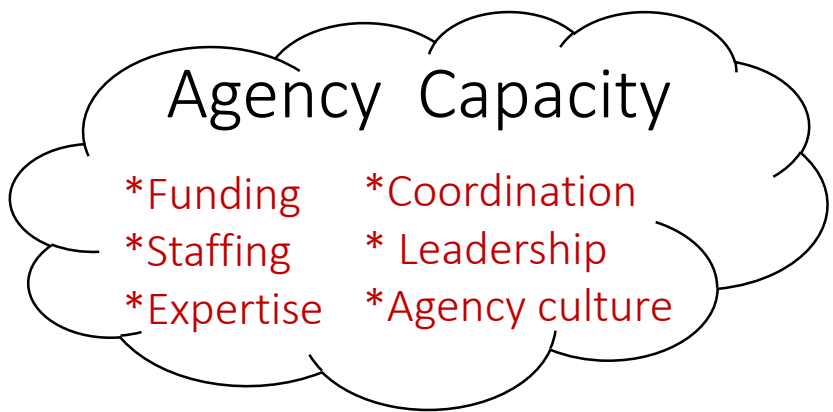
Key Lessons Learned

State capacity to engage in place-based planning needs to be institutionalized.

- The agencies' organizational culture will need to adapt to working as partners in locally-led planning processes.
- This requires support from mid and upper-level leadership in the core State agencies, greater vertical integration within agencies, and alignment of work plan priorities across the agencies.
- Agency staff need to acquire new skill sets, such as how to engage with communities in place-based planning and how to build trust between State agencies and community members.

Pilot Program Beginnings

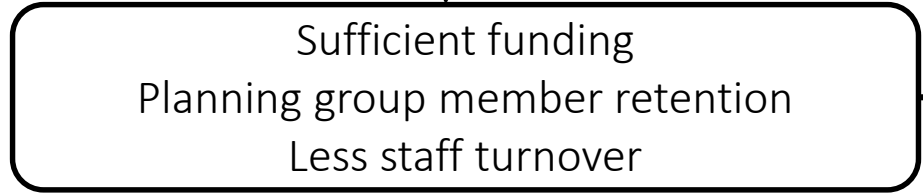
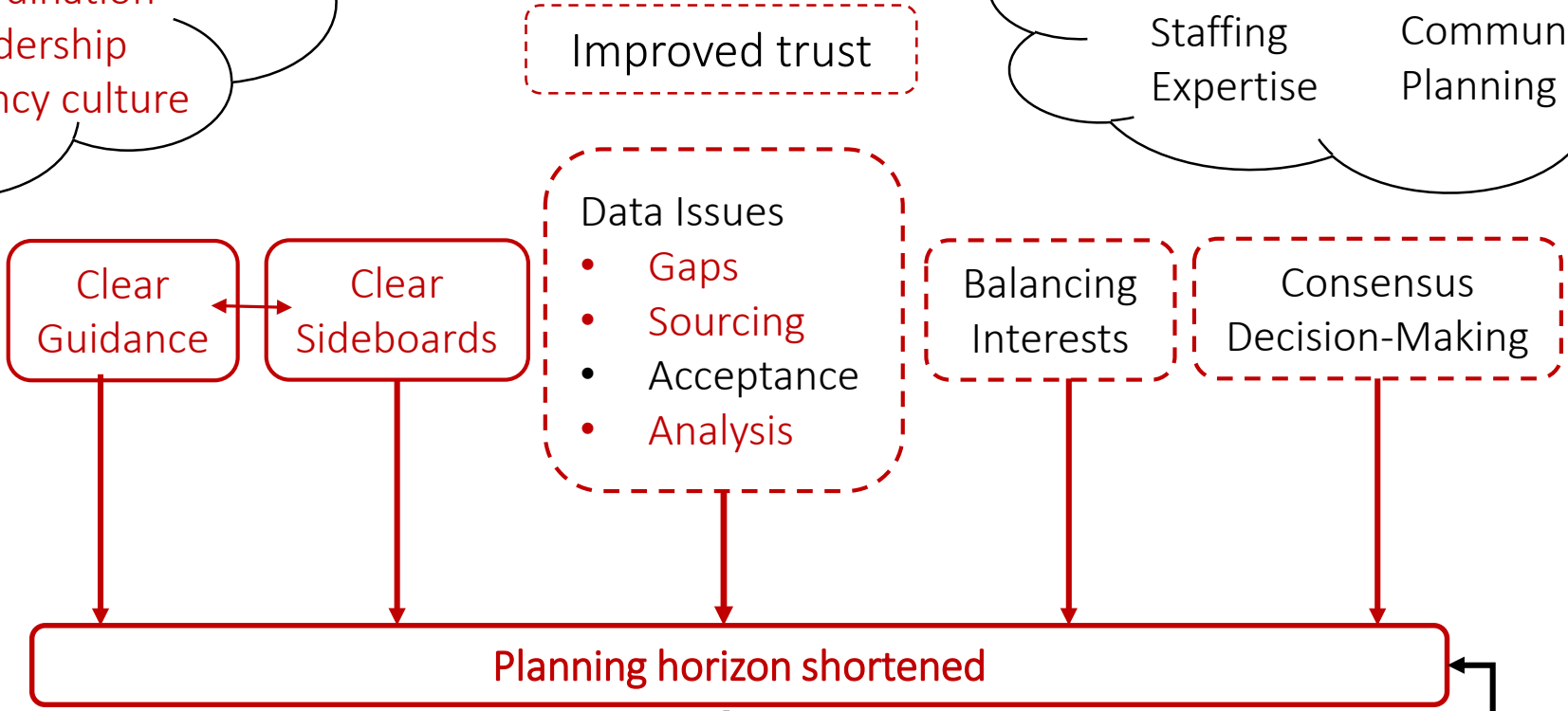




Situation Now



- Other factors*
- Geographic scope
 - Water supply context
 - Planning area complexity



Virtuous cycle

Final Take-Away

Integrated water planning is important, but it is complex and hard to do.

- Oregon has tried doing top-down water planning in the past, but it didn't work well. Place-based planning is one alternative to the top-down model.
- Through the pilot program, planning groups and agencies have learned a lot about what works well and what doesn't work so well.
- Many of the weaknesses are either already being addressed or can be addressed in future.
- *A key take-away is that the state agencies need a longer time horizon to prepare for this type of program. The time to prepare for the next phase of place-based planning is now.*

Thank you!

