

Independent Formative Review of the Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) Programme

Zenda Ofir

Review Panel Chair

Scientific Committee Meeting, Sanya, China

29 November 2016

Structure of presentation

1. Review approach
2. Fulfilling objectives, meeting expectations
3. Performance under IRDR's control
4. Critical issues and influences on success
5. Recommendations

1. Review approach

Key aspects of the Review

1. Shaped by:
Review questions &
intended use

2. 'Rapid Expert
Opinion Review':
Implications for
strength of evidence

3. 'Theory-based':
Based on program
logic

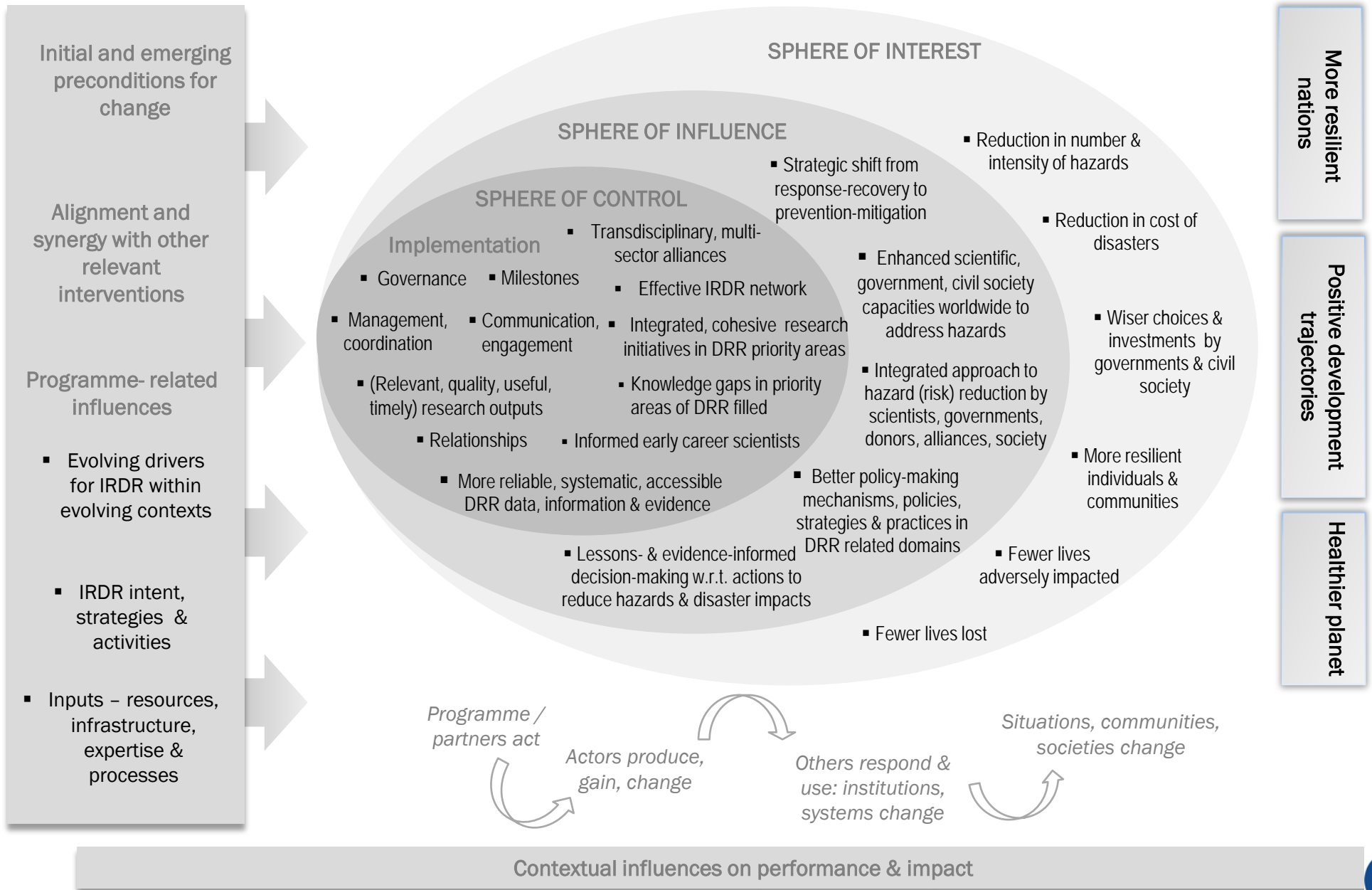
4. (Integrated) mixed
methods:
Quant. / qual.,
perceptual & factual

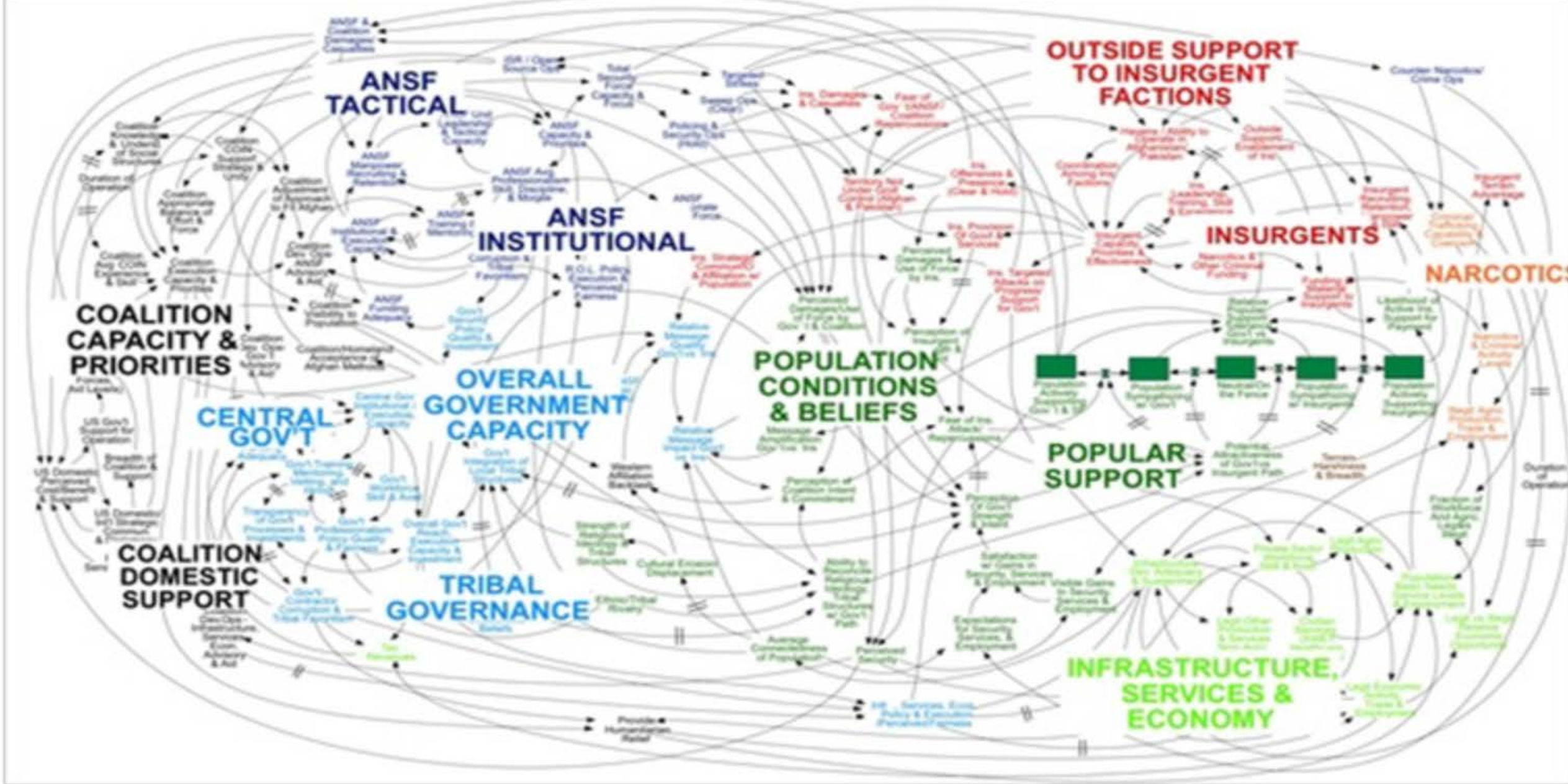
5. Stakeholder
stratification for
interviews, survey

6. Triangulation &
verification

2. Fulfilling objectives, meeting expectations

IRDR's results framework – part of its change logic





US military stakeholder map of Afghanistan, aka a complex system

Initial preconditions for IRDR success
(intersecting global, regional, national levels)

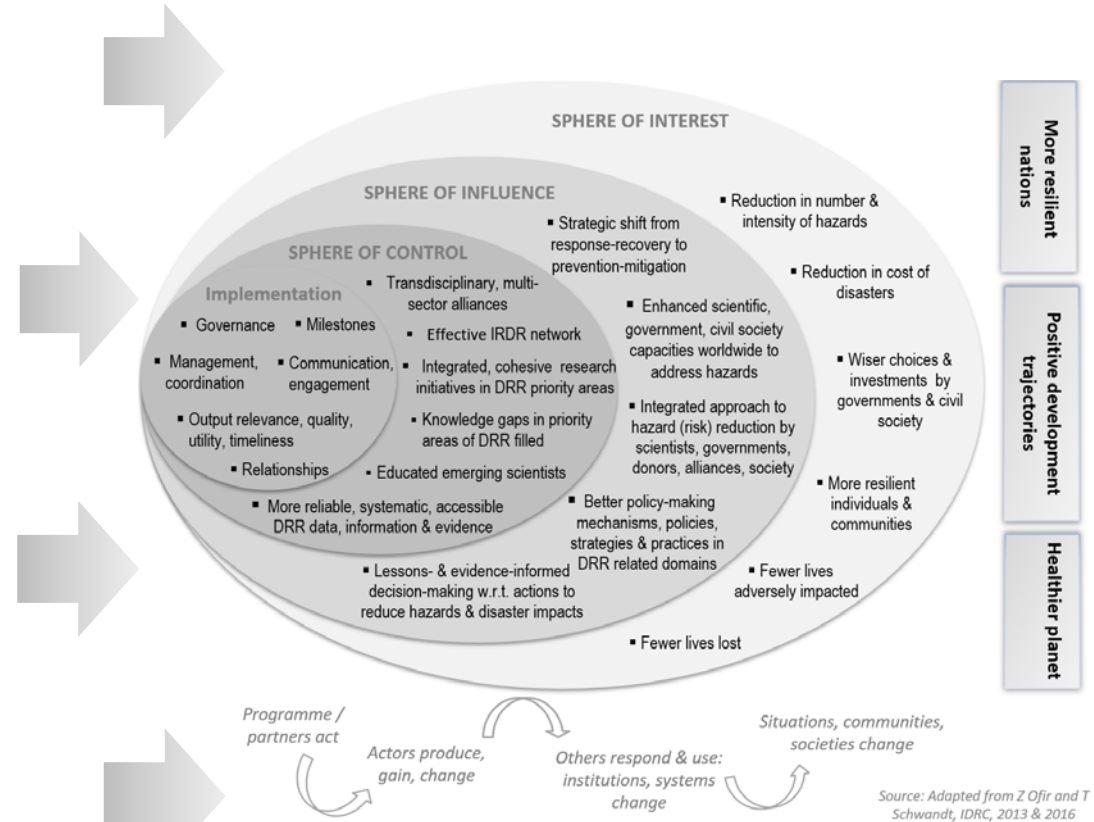
- Empathetic (global, regional, national) contexts
- Well-defined niche (timely, relevant & significant in science & application; informed by priority challenges, aligned with global conventions & trends)
- Benefits brought by ICSU brand & support
- Well-designed IRDR intervention
- Appropriate, sufficient, timely infrastructure, resources & financial flows
- Appropriate, sufficient scientific expertise & goodwill
- Architecture for implementation based on appropriate, productive relationships (partnerships, alliances)
- Appropriate research foci (relevant, significant, timely)

Effective, efficient implementation

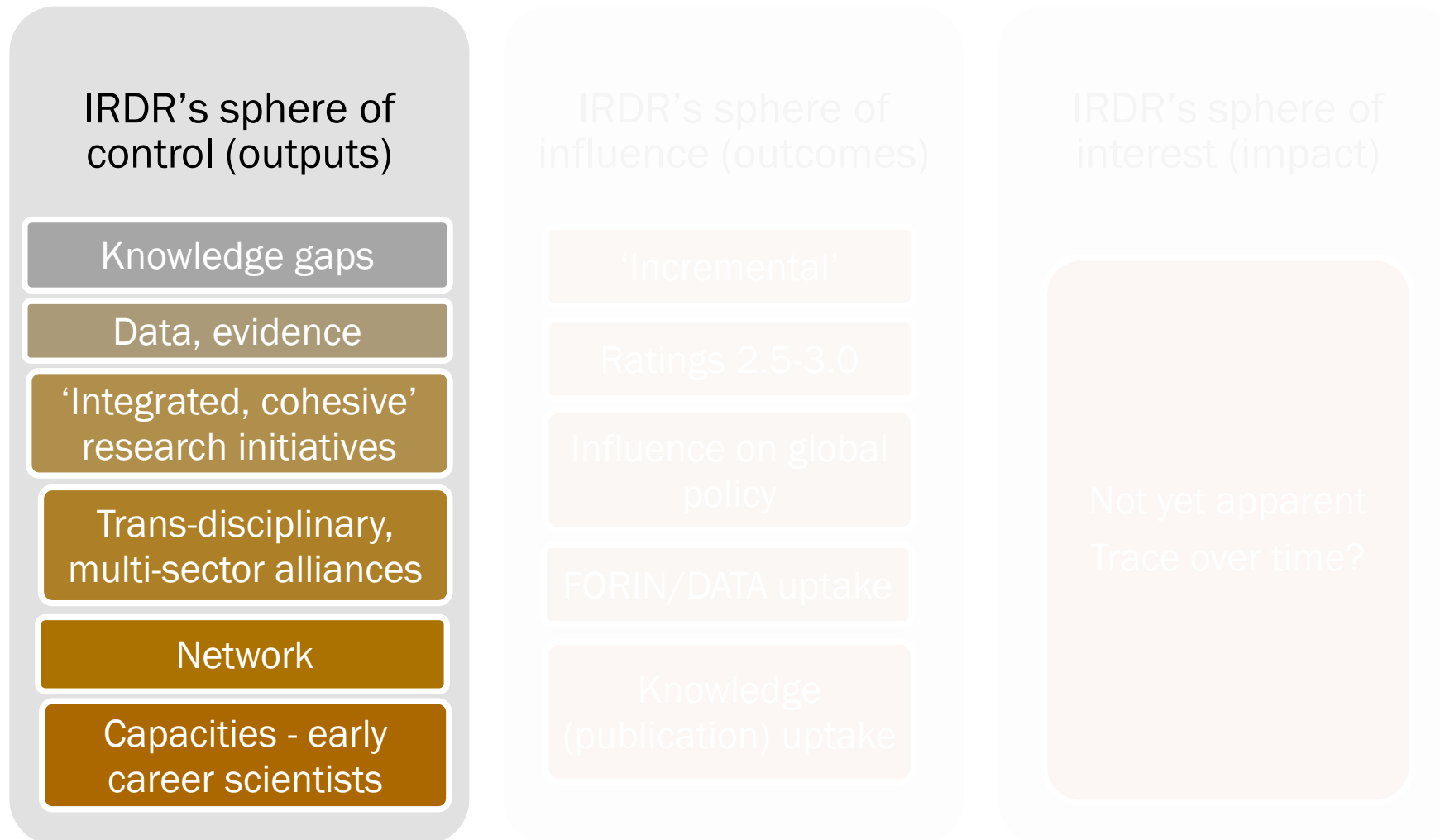
Emergent preconditions for IRDR success
(intersecting global, regional, national levels)

- Good governance & management
- Engaged, boundary-spanning science & scientific scholarship
- Catalytic action
- Incentivised, capable partners in the science and policy arenas
- Appropriate type of research (integrated, transdisciplinary, multi-sector, boundary-spanning, problem-solving, gap-filling)
- Incentivised, capable policy/decision-makers, & other users of IRDR contributions
- Appropriate engagement & communication with potential users
- Sufficient momentum and strategy to avoid emergence of duplicate or direct competitors in niche institutions

Alignment and synergy with other efforts

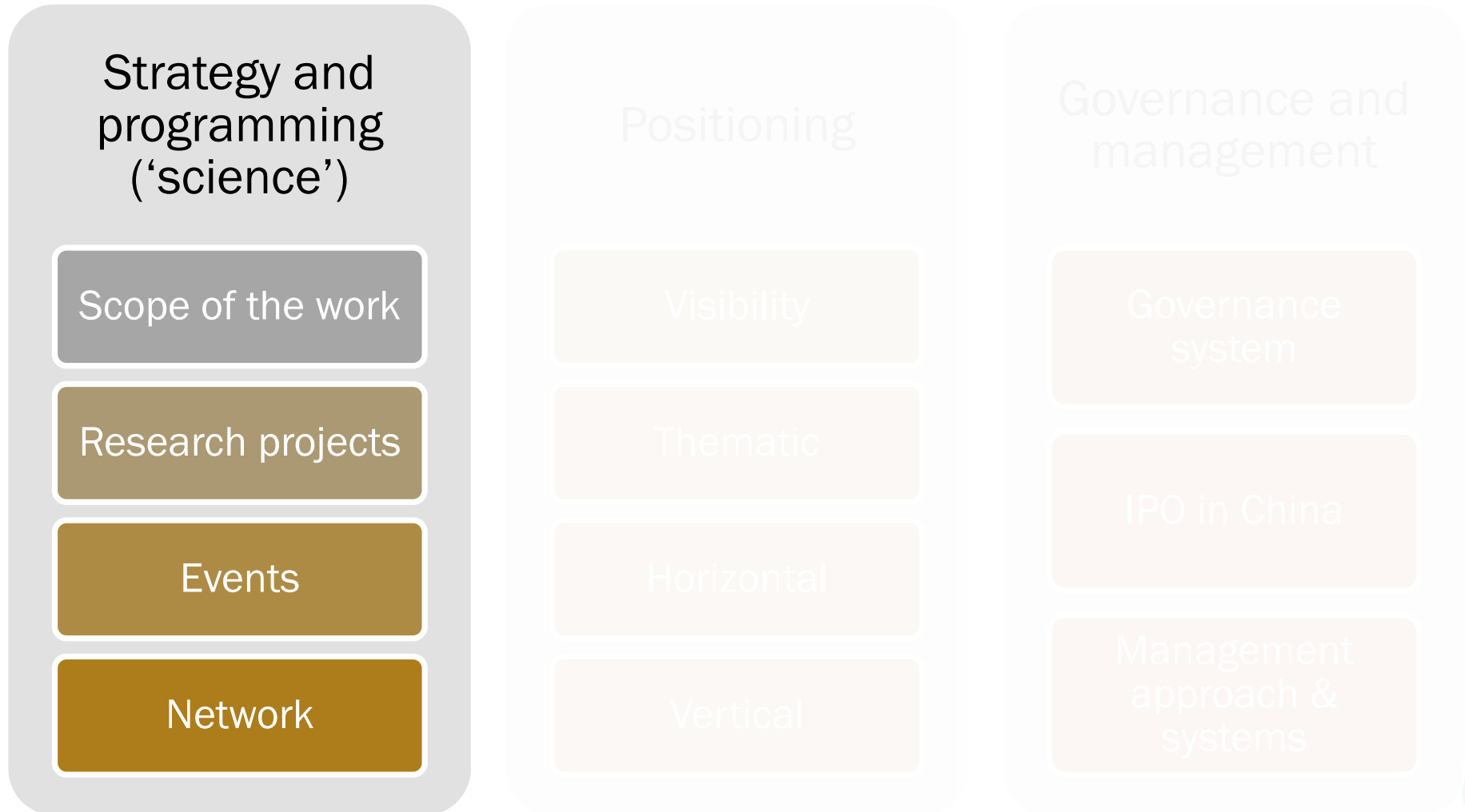


Success in fulfilling expectations: getting to outcomes?



3. Performance in IRDR's 'sphere of control'

Performance in three domains



4. Critical issues and influences on success

Critical issues (challenges) for consideration

1. 'Business as usual' vs ambition to change the business of science (in the DRR domain)
2. IRDR as entity, and its boundaries
3. Demonstrating 'integration'
4. Being a 'global action network' working towards large systems change
5. IRDR's niche and value proposition

Dimensions of IRDR's 'integrated' approach

□ (Trans)disciplinary cooperation

□ Working within 'reality' – field sites

□ Problem-focused solutions

□ Co-production with stakeholders

□ North/South interaction

Global Action Networks for Large Systems Change

- i. Common vision and agenda for change - based on shared understanding, agreed plans of action with mutually reinforcing activities.
- ii. Diversity in thinking and expertise, and collaboration across boundaries (e.g. thematic or geographic area, or series of sites for comparison and longitudinal studies).
- iii. Common motivation and incentives for collaboration.
- iv. Activities and arenas that allow people to connect, solve problems - be part of a 'community' that work together on issues of importance.
- v. Open and continuous communication to build trust
- vi. Data collection and consistent measurement of results – supporting alignment, accountability and learning, with continual integration of knowledge into what is being done.

Towards IRDR's niche and value proposition

Confluence of elements (to be further analysed):

- ❑ Focus on integration
- ❑ Strength of IRDR's vision captured in the Science Plan
- ❑ Highly respected scientists as voice for DRR
- ❑ High profile co-sponsors, in particular ICSU's brand among scientists
- ❑ Global to local focus, and the potential to move from science to practice using comparative, context-sensitive studies
- ❑ IPO located where DRR is a priority, and with ample funding for science
- ❑ Potential to strengthen capacities of different types based on 'doing things differently'

Main negative influences

- ❑ Prejudices & decisions at inception (related to set-up of ICSU Interdisciplinary Bodies)
- ❑ Business model: lack of strategic approach to resourcing ('ad hoc project' vs 'strategic program' approach)
- ❑ Shortcomings in governance, strategic leadership & management systems
- ❑ Insufficient focus on collective action for collective impact
- ❑ Hands-off approach of co-sponsors

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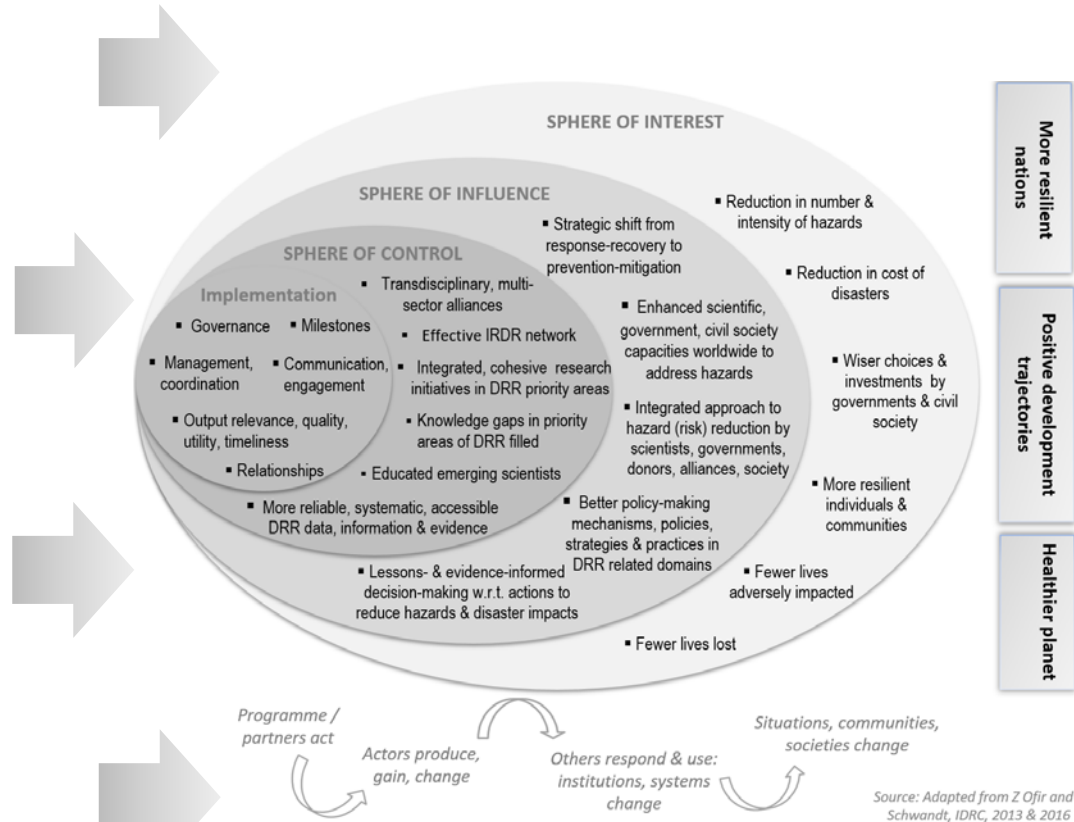
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Alignment and synergy with other efforts



Source: Adapted from Z Ofir and T Schwandt, IDRC, 2013 & 2016

5. Recommendations

1. Rethink and reshape IRDR's strategy

- ❑ Return to the ambition in the **Science Plan**, while building on the foundation that has been laid.
- ❑ Keep demonstration of the **value of 'integration'** at the core
- ❑ Plan with due consideration of IRDR's **value proposition, niche & comparative advantage** in the 'DRR for sustained development' landscape
- ❑ Expand **time horizon** until 2025

2. Change IRDR's business model & fundraising approach

- ❑ Move from **project to program** approach
- ❑ Implement a proper **fundraising strategy**, with clear and shared responsibilities, that engage co-sponsors
- ❑ **Innovative fundraising** from non-conventional sources

3. Adjust the governance system

- ❑ **Separate** oversight, scientific leadership & guidance, and program leadership & management – Governing Board
- ❑ Clearly allocate **responsibilities & reporting lines**
- ❑ Enable **strategic and adaptive management** for learning and accountability

4. Strengthen leadership, management & communication

- ❑ Establish **leadership** by Executive Director, in collaboration with SC Chair / executive
- ❑ Put in place **appropriate systems** (monitoring, evaluation, performance & knowledge management) for IRDR ‘family’
- ❑ Nurture **relationships** among all parts of IRDR, incl. in China
- ❑ Focus on **communication**

5. Operate as ‘action network’ towards collective impact and large systems change

- ❑ Learn from experience of **action networks** working for **collective impact & large systems change**
- ❑ Strengthen **partnerships** with a strategic perspective
- ❑ Use **diversity** to learn from different contexts, knowledge systems

Thank you for your attention