

Innovation platforms in agricultural research

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International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)

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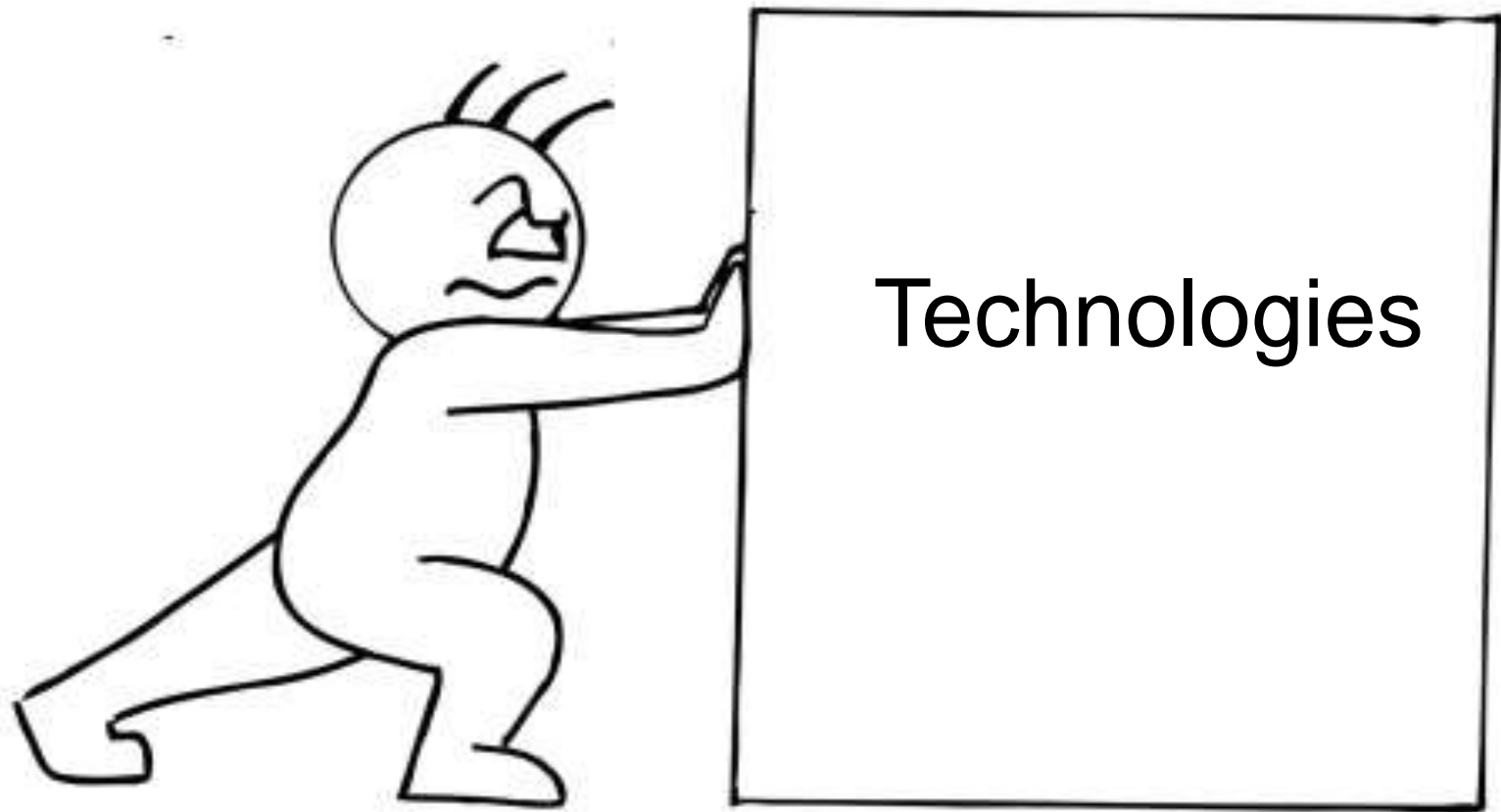
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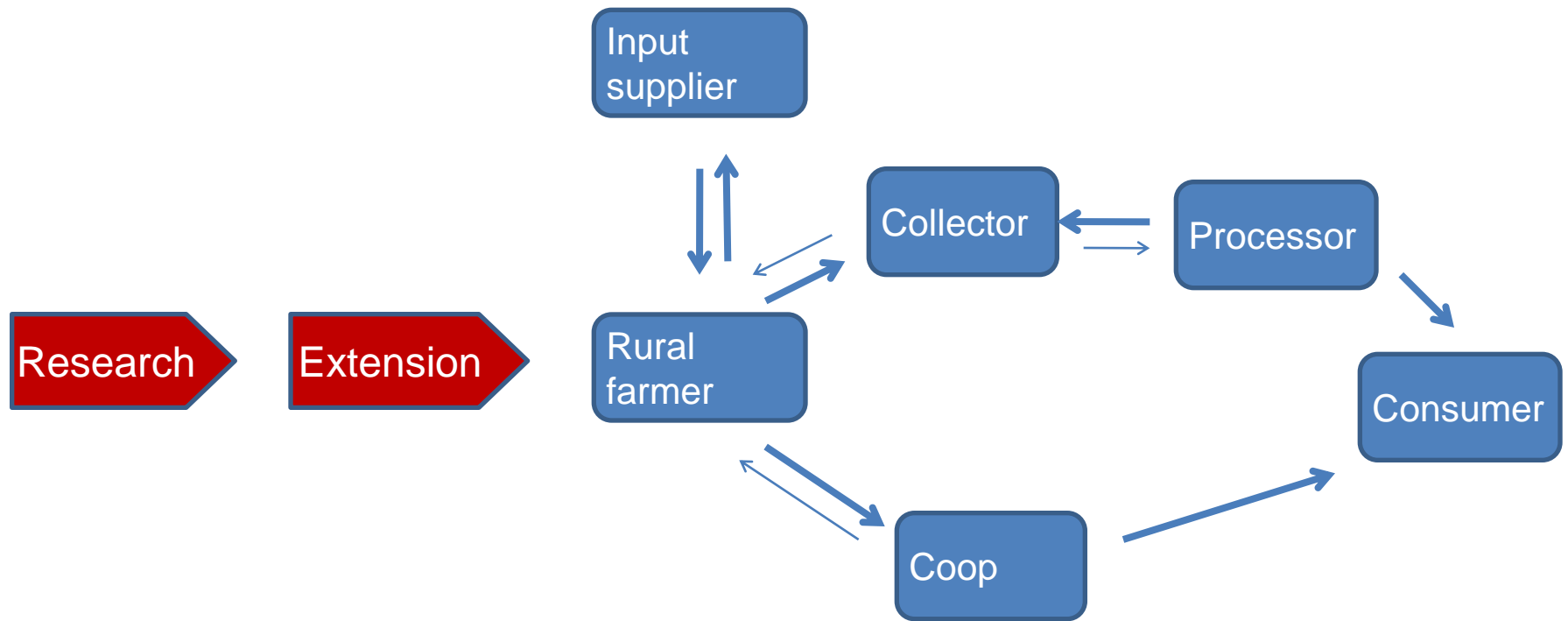


Conventional approach to agricultural research



Source: Duncan, 2011

Conventional approach: Researcher to farmer



From talking technologies to talking innovations

THINK SYSTEMS !!!

What is Innovation?

New practice/s, processes, systems, products, services, outputs and outcomes in the marketplace, workplace and/or community.

Participatory action research

Participatory action research is not a method - it is an **approach** to research.

Action + research

Involves people who are concerned about or affected by an issue taking a leading role in producing and using knowledge about it.

- **Driven by participants**
- **Democratic knowledge sharing (Plan, Act, Observe and Reflect)**
- **Collaborative** at every stage
- Results in **action, change or improvement**
- **Cyclical** - action and critical reflection take place throughout



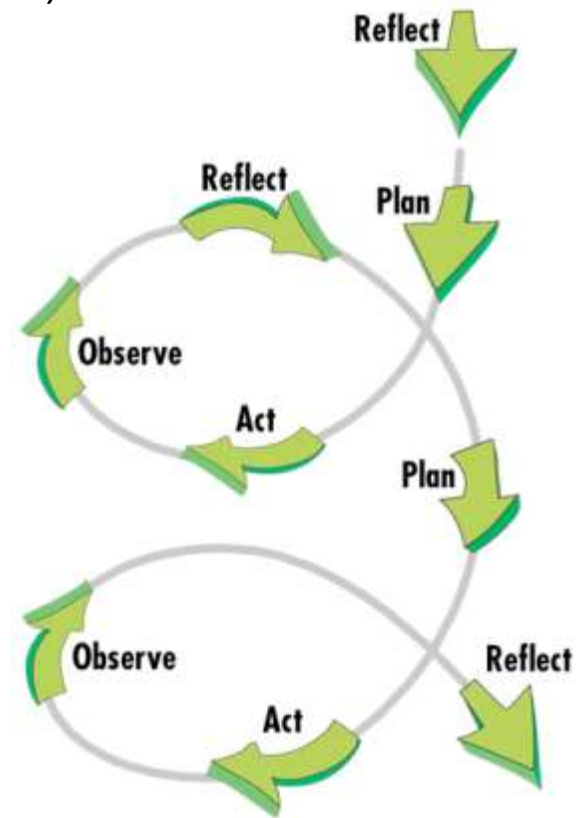
Why Action Research?

Weaknesses of conventional research approaches:

- Complex problems/situations are not easily addressed
- Does not respond adequately to demand (researcher driven)
- Outputs not timely or in right formats for use
- Fails to reflect or accommodate reality
- Capacity not up-scaled and often lost after project close

Benefits of action research:

- Focused on problems identified by stakeholders
- Flexible- not necessarily designed in detail from the start
- Inputs from a range of disciplines – interdisciplinary
- Accepting of multiple sources of evidence and “data”
- Process can be used to empower participants



Innovation Systems Approach



Innovation Platform - intro



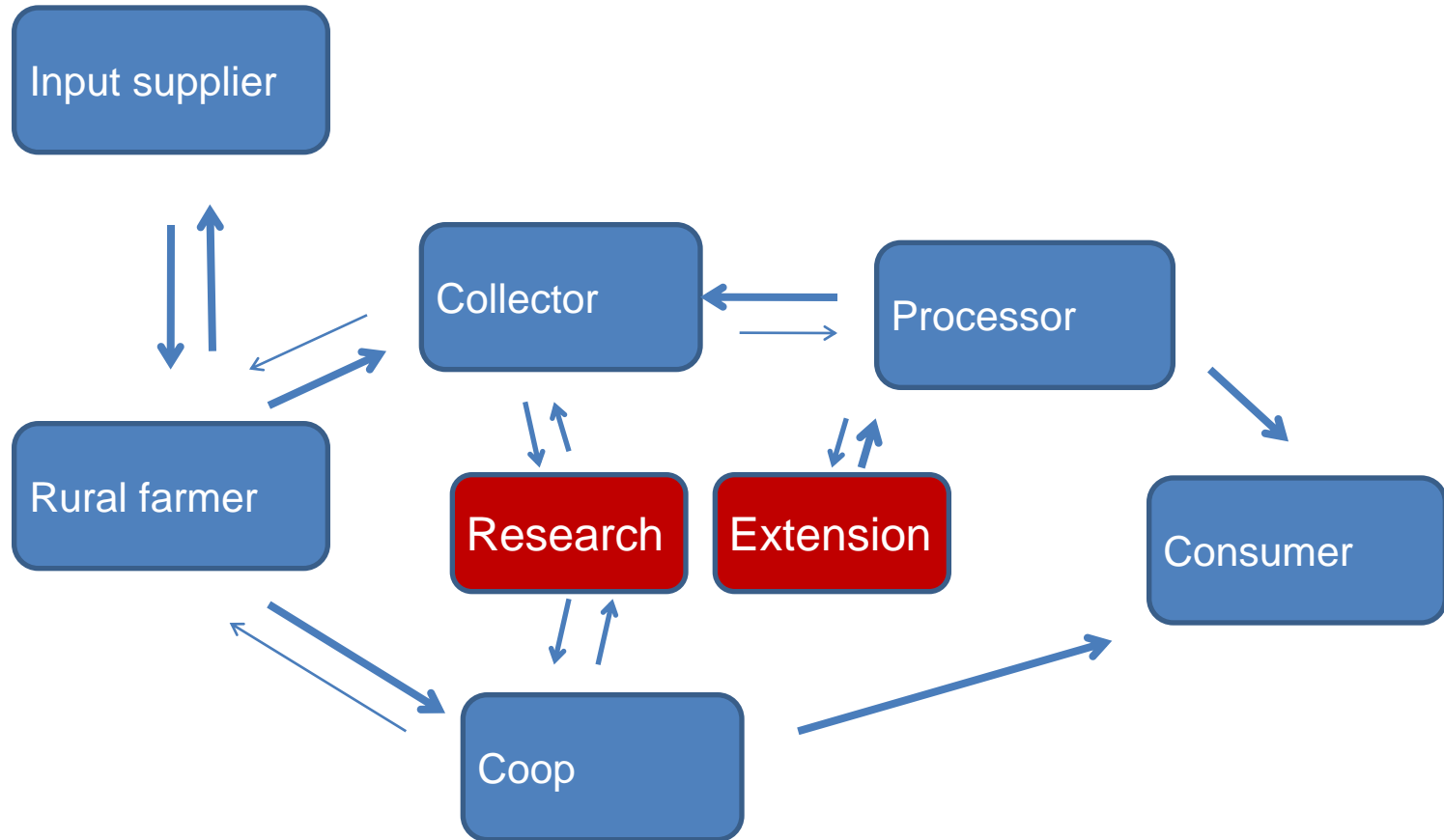
If we always do

What we always did,

We will always get

What we always got!!!

Innovation Systems Approach: collaborative research



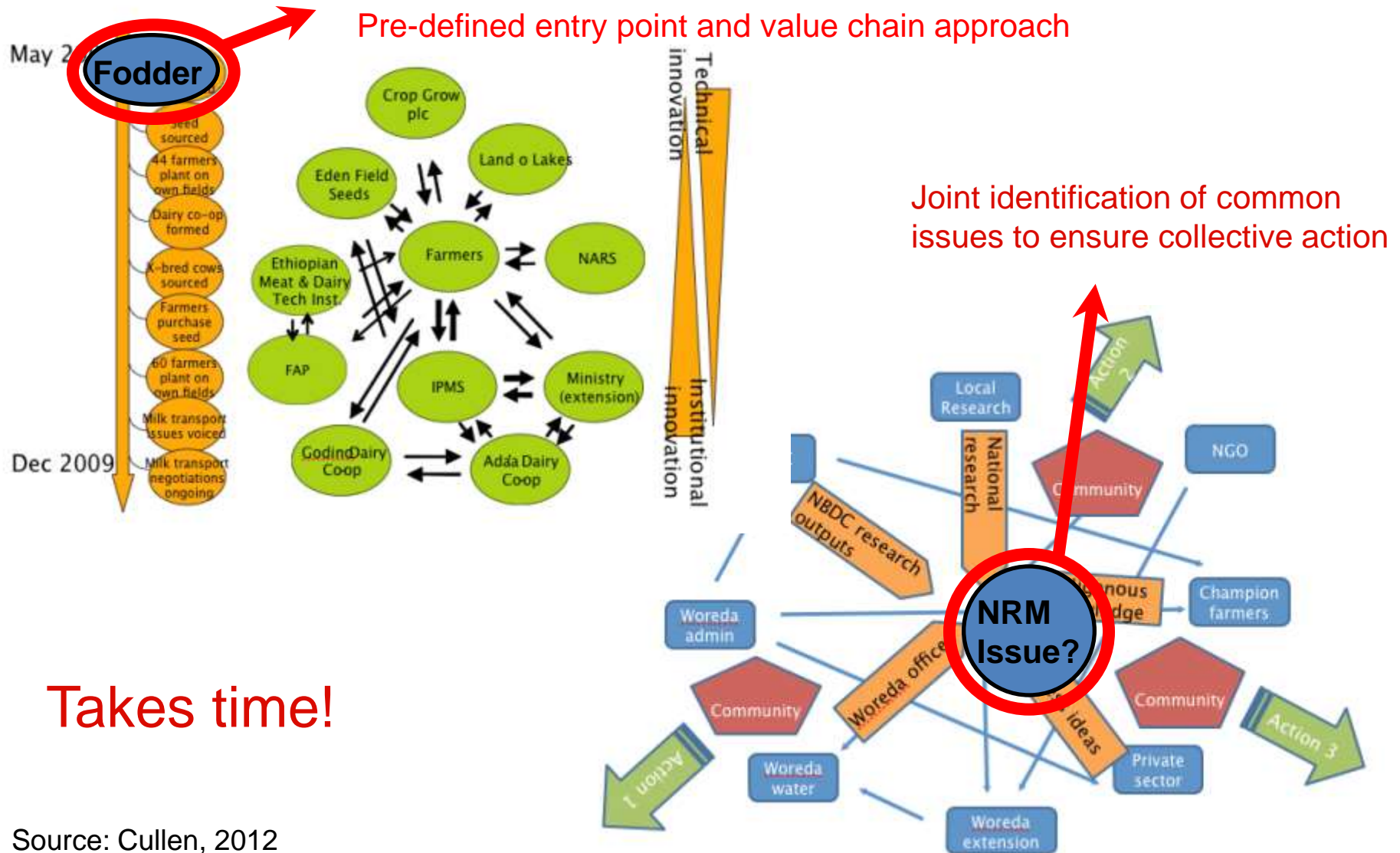
So what are innovation platforms?

- It is a forum for learning, action and change. It operates by bringing together stakeholders on the basis of mutual interest and clearly defined institutional roles and commitment.
- The stakeholders often represent different organisations, with different backgrounds and interests (e.g. farmers, agricultural input suppliers, traders, food processors, researchers, government officials, etc).
- These individuals come together at the IP forum to diagnose problems, identify opportunities and find ways to achieve their goals.
- They may design and implement activities as a platform or coordinate activities by individual members.
- Platforms also enable diverging interests to come to the fore so that compromises can be developed.

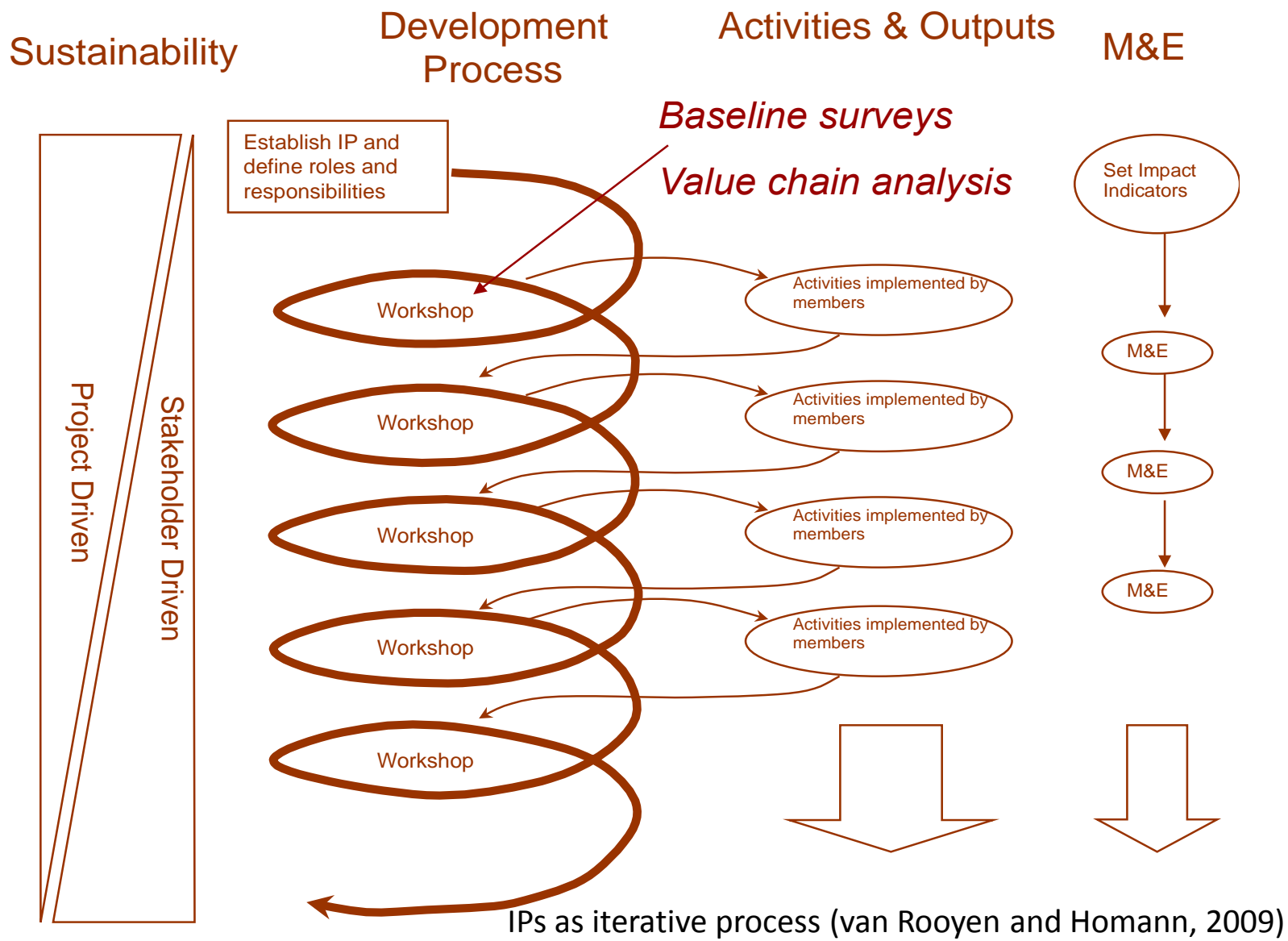
Multiple configurations



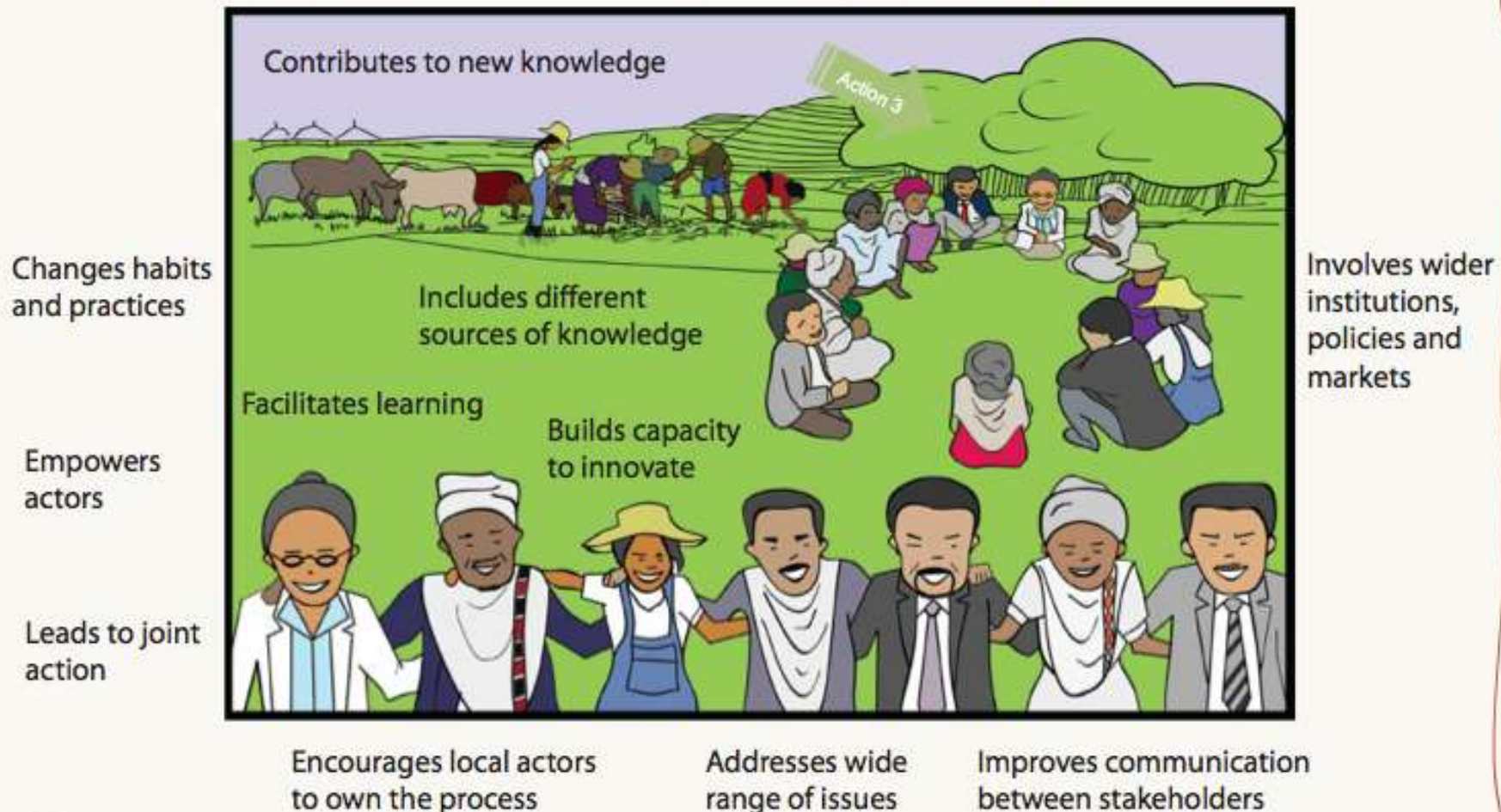
Different approaches to IPs



How does it work?



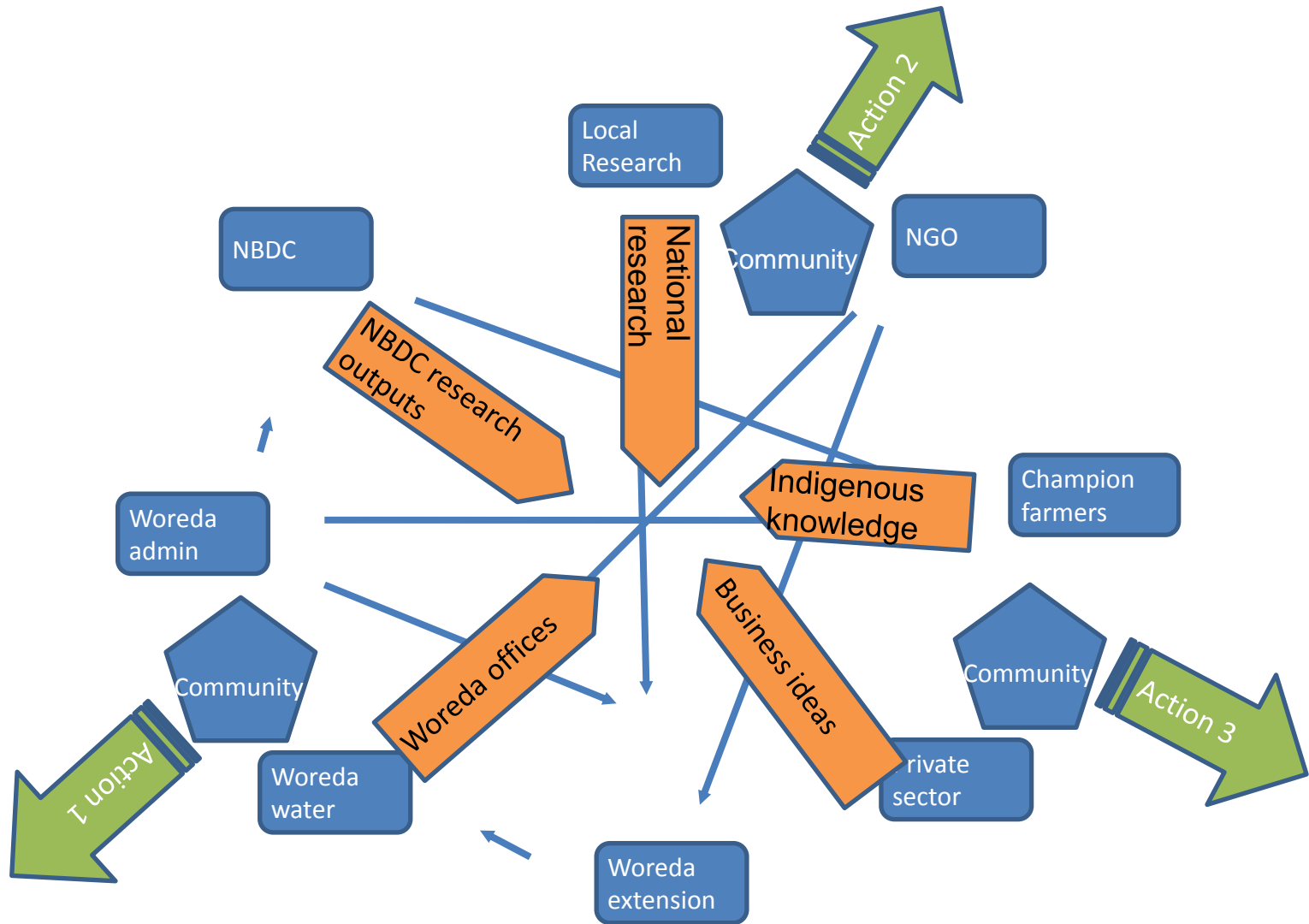
But how do innovation platforms change how things are done?



Nile Basin Development Challenge : Innovation Platforms for NRM



Platforms based around NRM: Incentives for collective action needed



Source: Duncan, 2011

NRM Issues

Site	Main Issue	Related Issues
Fogera	Unrestricted grazing	Land degradation
Diga	Land degradation	Termite infestation *
Jeldu	Soil erosion	Deforestation

Fodder interventions were selected by IPs in all three sites to address these issues

* Interventions in Diga linked to CPWF Termite Action Research Project

Source: Cullen, 2012





Innovation
funds: provided
support for
community
initiatives

IP Fodder interventions complemented national SLM campaign



Source: Cullen, 2012

Prerequisites for IPs

- Basic incentives for involvement
- Flexibility (research questions, planning, budget, mandates, outcomes, stakeholder involvement)
- Understanding, commitment, engagement, co-ownership
- Shared investment
- Urgency/relevance - aligns with current key issues or concerns
- Momentum and champions
- Space for success and failure, for collaboration, negotiation and conflict

Benefits of IPs for research

- Research strengthens innovation platforms: activities are better informed, more systematic and more credible.
- Platforms can strengthen research: it is more applied, more realistic, more acceptable.
- Engaging stakeholders in research can help identify research questions and desired outcomes, and can improve data collection and analysis.
- Platforms enable researchers to engage with potential research users (such as policymakers and farmers), making it more likely that findings get used.

Implications and challenges...

- New research approach: from project-oriented to process-oriented. Demands flexible and dynamic research configurations
- Increased complexity/uncertainty
- New roles, obligations and mandates for research(ers)
- Requires good facilitation
- Resource and time intensive
- Need to remain credible, legitimate and relevant towards multiple stakeholders
- Stakeholder inclusion/exclusion, representation and engagement
- Actions and outcomes may not meet project time tables or expectations
- Difficult to monitor and evaluate IP process and outcomes. **Have to work with socio-economists- like never before.**

For more information about ILRI's IP projects:

<http://fodderadoption.wordpress.com>

<http://nilebdc.org>

<http://www.waterandfood.info>



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