

Multi-level collaboration and good environmental governance

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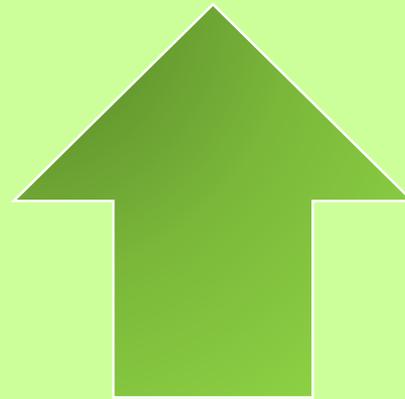
Presentation at the webinar “Working together for sustainable farming – Agri-environmental policy, practice and experience”. 3 March 2021

What this presentation will cover

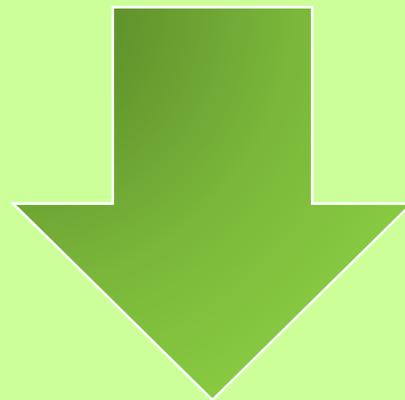
- Some basics for understanding how to improve agri-environmental governance
 - What conditions are required to initiate collaboration?
 - What skills are required?
 - What are the barriers?
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- Some insights from research in UK, Germany and Australia in agri-environmental policy and natural resource management

Key concepts

- Social-ecological system
- Good governance
- Institutional levels
- Policy hierarchy
- Social capital



Narrow objectives; clear beneficiaries; straightforward monitoring; uncontested cause-effect relationships



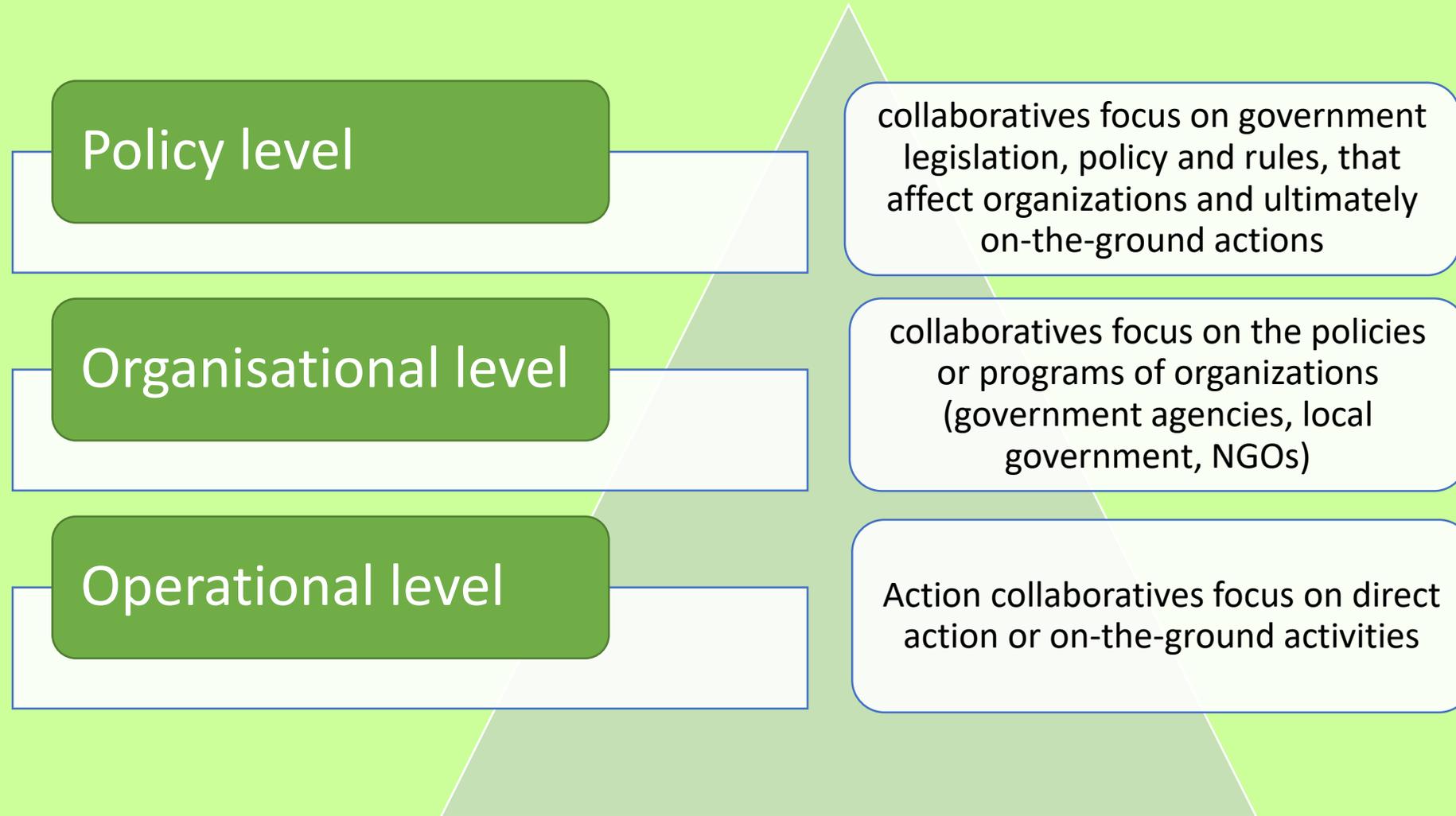
Complex, multi-level objectives; wide range of different types of beneficiaries; complex monitoring

Good governance

Good environmental governance needs to address:

- Actors and roles, incl. participation of non-state actors in decision making
- Accountability and legitimacy
- Fit, interplay and scale of a) the environmental concern and b) multi-level actor networks
- Adaptiveness, flexibility and learning, to respond to uncertainty and change that characterise complex systems
- Knowledge co-production, validity of different knowledge sources
- Evaluation and monitoring

Institutional levels



Example: action and organisational level

Table 2 Key characteristics of local Landcare groups and regional NRM bodies

Local Landcare groups

- Involvement is voluntary
- Participants pay a membership fee
- Generally mixed membership but also groups that are comprised of only farmers, or only of community members with an interest in conservation
- High level of commitment required
- Identification with the aim and objectives of the group
- Small scale, small population
- Issue of local significance
- Simple institutional setting
- Implementing change via on-the-ground action

Regional NRM bodies

- Regional bodies usually employ paid staff
- The committees or boards of the regional bodies have mixed representatives from the community who receive a sitting fee or allowance for the term they are appointed
- Commitment required only for the time of employment or the term the members are appointed for
- Large scale, large population
- Issues of regional significance
- Complex institutional setting
- Implementing change by influencing programs and funding allocation

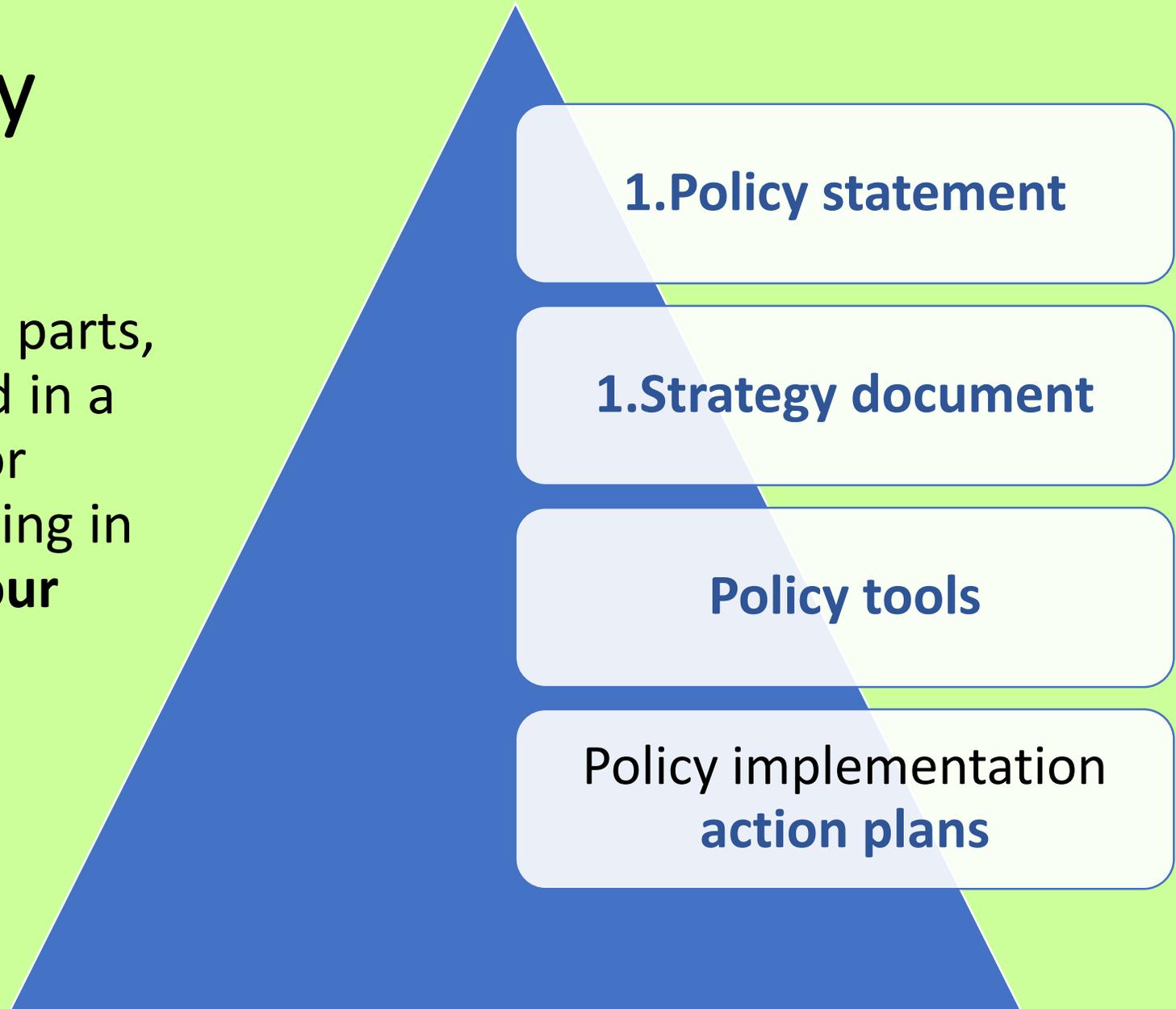
Collaboratives at action vs organisational level

- Membership (fee, voluntary, composition, direct vs representative)
- Employing paid staff
- Level of commitment required (fixed term vs open ended)
- Scale and population affected by decisions and actions
- Issues of local/ regional significance – how success is perceived/ measured
- Simple vs complex institutional setting
- Implementing change via on-the-ground action/
by influencing programs and funding allocations
- Different language

Similar differences with collaboratives at policy level
→ can cause difficulties in communication, in aligning interests, in agreeing priorities and how to proceed

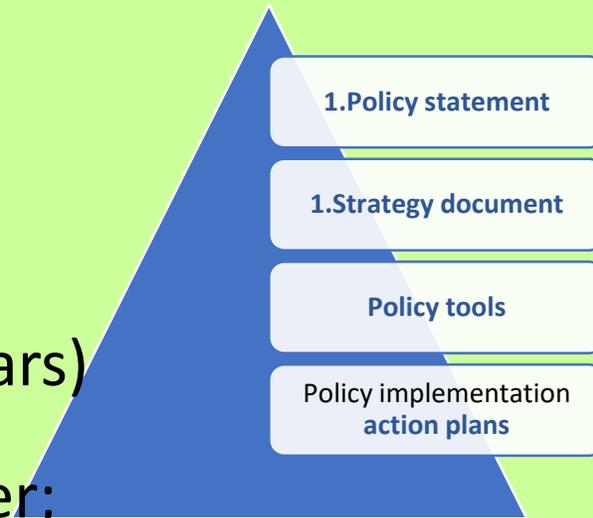
Policy hierarchy

A policy typically has a number of constituent parts, commonly constructed in a hierarchical typology or '**policy bundle**' consisting in descending order of **four parts**



Policy hierarchy

1. **Policy statement** or policy document (time frame 5-20 years) describing long-term broader goals for changes in behaviours, altered state or condition of the subject matter;
2. **Strategy document** (time frame 5-10 years) detailing steps and activities required to implement the policy statement;
3. **Policy tools**, the general collection of approaches and methods available to implement the set of activities in the strategy document, including education programmes, funding schemes, regulation, legislation, provision of information, provision of resources such as staff time;
4. Policy implementation **action plans** (time frame: 1-3 years), often written as rolling annual action plans including specifications for materials needed, project management, funding schedule and reporting arrangements.

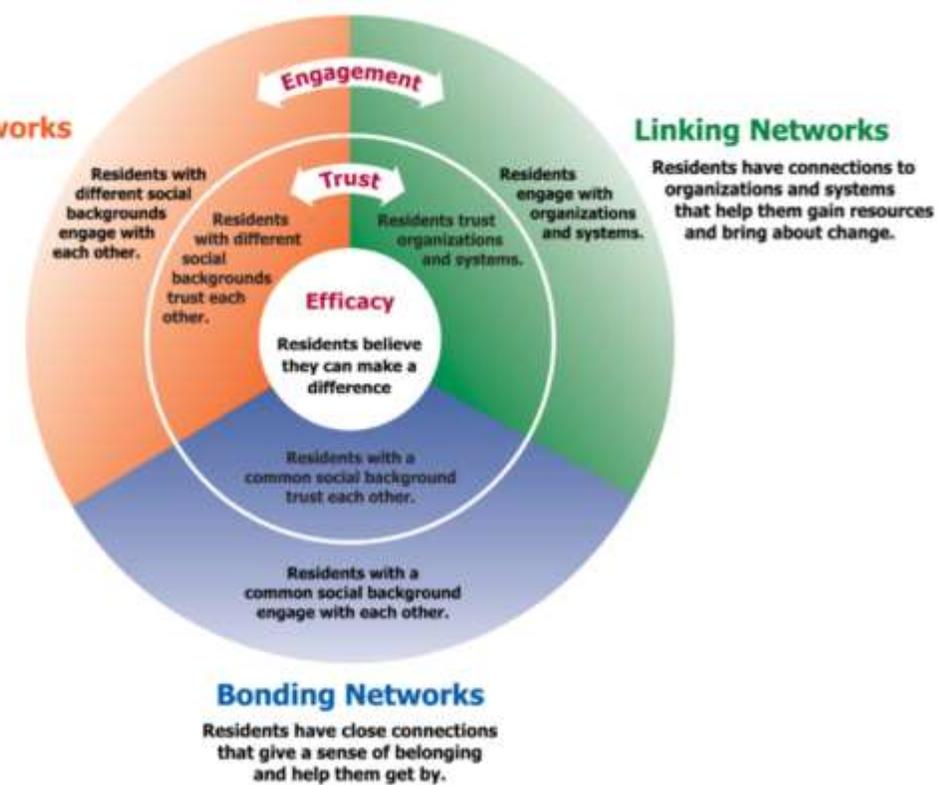


(Pre)conditions

- Actual **scope** to make changes & have influence (e.g. policy windows, funding cycles, change in government after election)
- **Transparency** – not information overload
- **Transaction costs**: collaboration is not free
- Engaging in collaboration must bring benefits to make up for transaction costs (intrinsic motivation, seeing results, addressing a problem)
- Pre-existing **social capital** (bonding, bridging linking)
- **Trust** takes a long time to build; yet easily lost (staff changes, not honour agreements)

Bridging Networks

Residents have broad connections that help them expand opportunities.



Skills

- Facilitator to support two-way communication, group working
- ‘Interpreter’: speaking different ‘languages’, translation
- Charismatic leader: building momentum, securing buy-in
- ‘Process manager’ for collaborative process: perception of a fair process may be more important than outcome
- ‘Investor’ in social capital: to maintain and expand relationships and networks that enable people to act collectively
- Professionalisation
- Knowledge (agriculture, ecology, business, administration)



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