

The Role of a National System of Indicators in Evaluation of Conservation

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Taking the Long View

- Conservation Evaluation is similar to Investment Analysis
- Current weaknesses need to be addressed by gradual improvement over decades

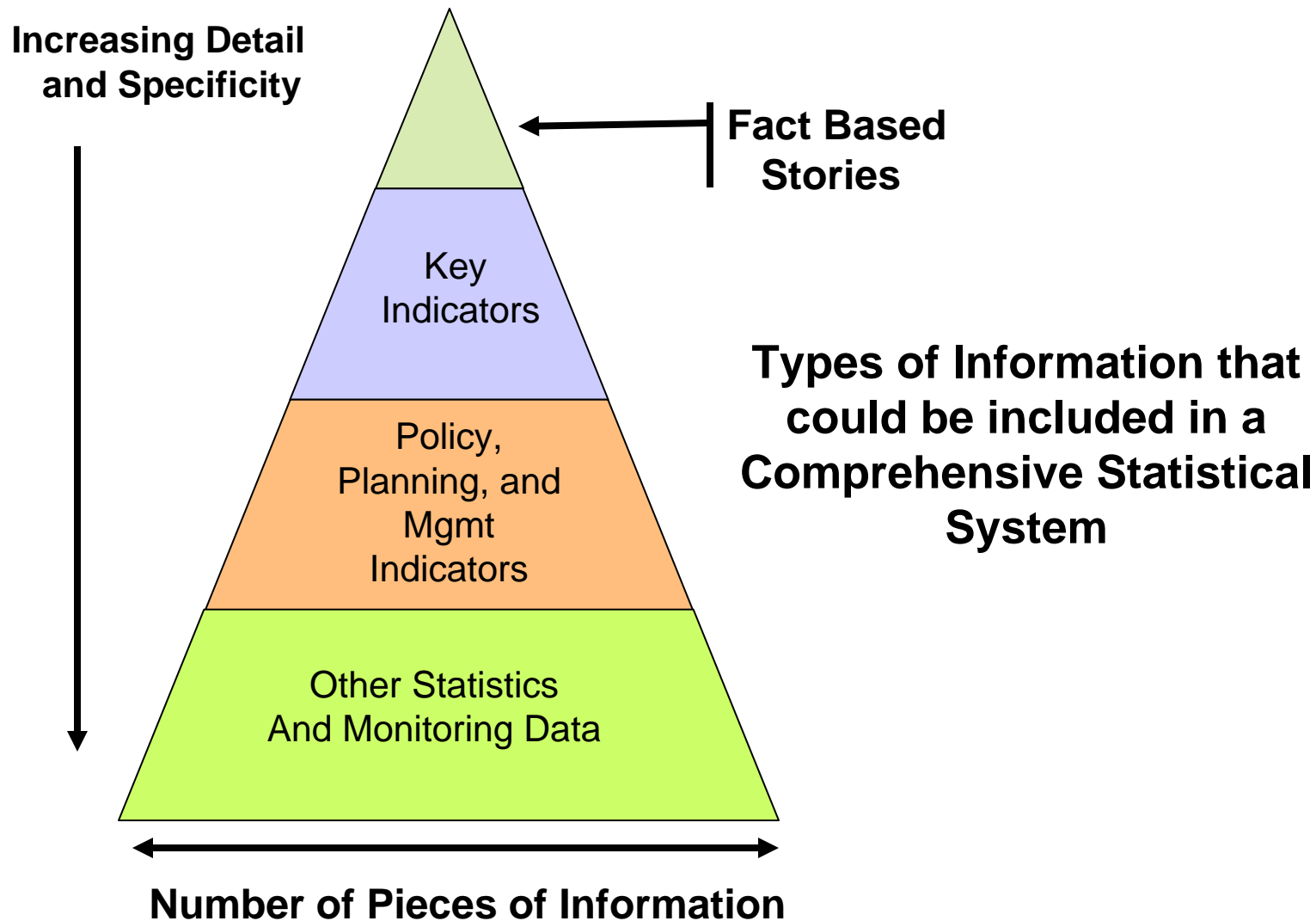
Improvements that are Needed:

- Greater consistency in measurements and data
- Greater consistency in evaluation methods
- Improved ability to attribute outcomes to actions
- More widespread understanding of how conservation works

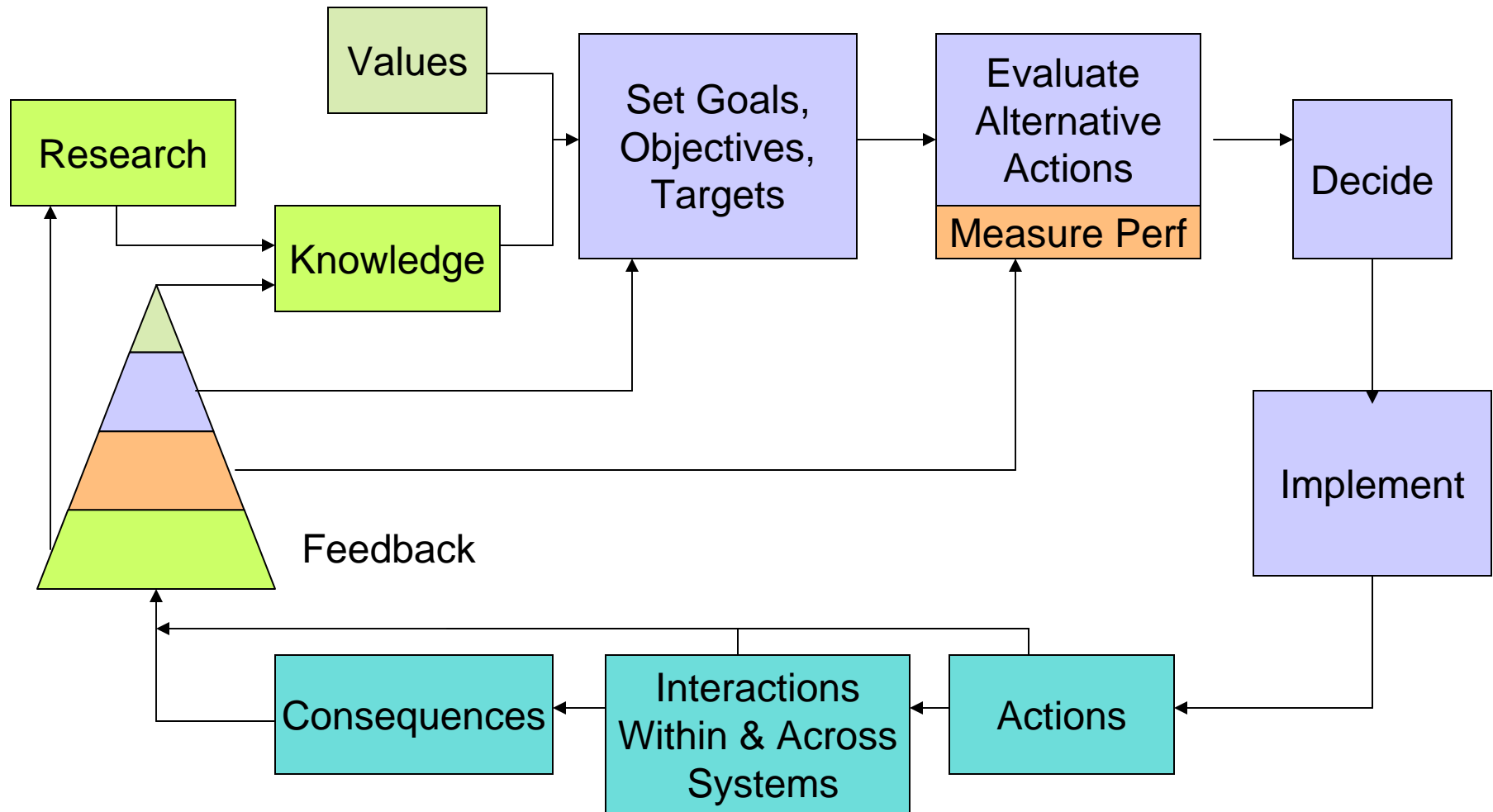
A Vision of a National System of Environmental Indicators and Statistics

- **A comprehensive set of indicators and statistics on the environment and natural resources**
- **High quality data and statistical methods**
- **Substantially greater consistency over time and across scales and institutions**
- **Up-to-date information technology to compile and provide access to data and indicators**
- **Specialized and widely trusted institutions to compile, publish and improve indicators**

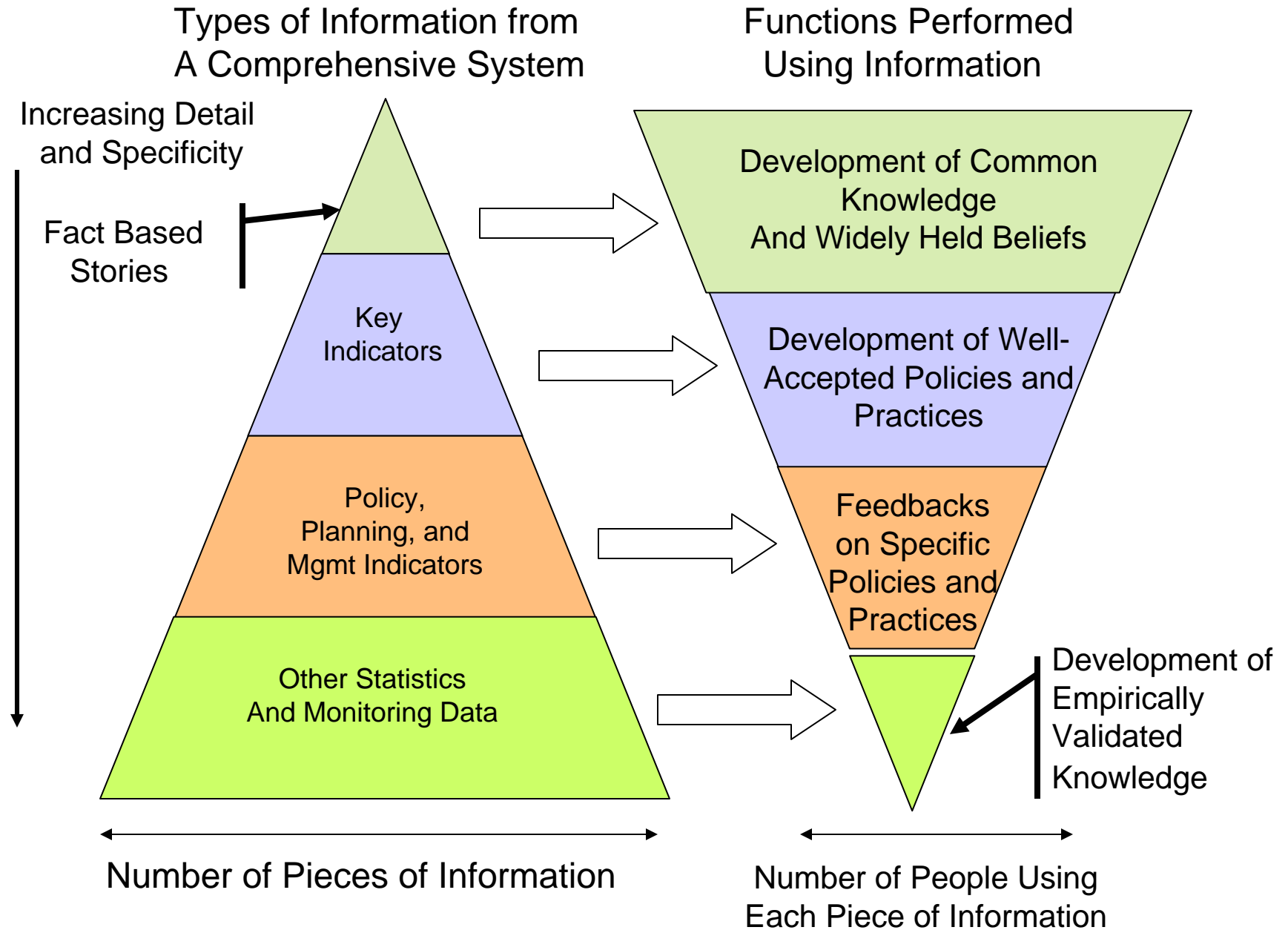
The Information Pyramid

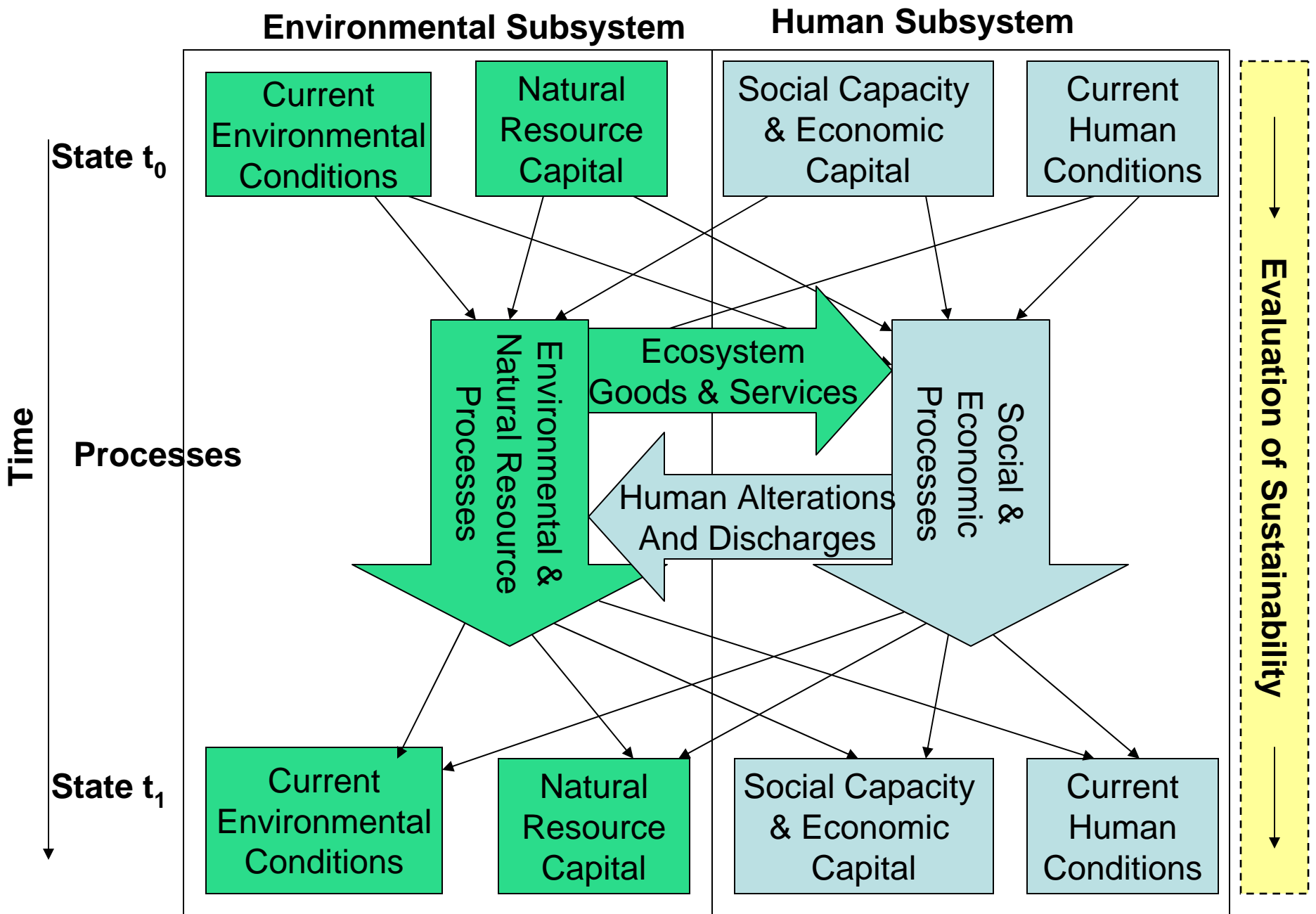


The Role of Feedback In Policy, Planning and Management



Types of Information and Functions





Conceptual Framework for Sustainable Resource Management Indicators

What do we have in place?

- We have technical resources and significant environmental monitoring capabilities that produce large amounts of data.
- They are located within existing research, regulatory and management organizations.

We Have Many Efforts To Develop Environmental Indicators

- Heinz Center's State of the Nation's Ecosystems Report
- The National Academies' Key National Indicator Initiative
- EPA's Report on the Environment
- Four Sustainable Resource Management Roundtables
- Numerous State, Local and Corporate Projects

Programs that provide data for environmental indicators are widely dispersed

- The Heinz Center's 2002 Report found adequate data for 58 of the 103 indicators it selected.
- Data for the 58 came from 20 Federal programs in 15 different agencies located in 6 different departments. (Source: GAO-05-376)

What do we lack?

- Monitoring programs adequate to produce the data for over half of the indicators that have been selected by recent efforts.
- Institutional arrangements that can bring forth additional monitoring, improve its consistency and provide for its continuation.

We need institutions with the primary mission of statistical reporting on the environment.

- That can become forceful customers of environmental monitoring programs
- That can become trusted sources of high quality indicators, statistics and data.

The Collaboration on Indicators on the Nation's Environment

- Started as an informal collaboration
- Developed a proposal for a process to design institutions for statistical reporting on the environment
- Now moving into the implementation of that process

Key tasks to be performed

1. Design the Scope and Architecture for a National System of Indicators
2. Identify Institutional Functions and Design Criteria
3. Survey and Analyze Current Institutions
4. Develop and Assess Options
5. Select and Implement Recommended Institutional Arrangements