What insights are offered by experiences of the "Ecosystem Approach"?

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1) **The Ecosystem Approach (EcA)**

2) **Our exploration of the EcA**

3) **Challenges experienced**

4) **Implications**

1) What is the EcA?

- A 'new' approach to natural resource management

  - Holistic and participatory approach to management

  - Implemented via 12 "Malawi Principles"

  - http://www.cbd.int/ecosystem/

- Incorporates key points of ecosystem-based management, plus arguments for decentralised participatory management

  - Not the same as "ecosystem services approaches" although understanding in terms of ecosystem services can feed in.

1) What is the EcA?

- Adopted in 2000 but few examples

  - Requests for guidance on implementation

  - Hints that it is challenging

- Needs to be better understood

  - Reflects many ideas about how to improve SES governance mirrors many themes at this conference

  - What insights can it offer about if /how to change natural resource management practices?

2) Our exploration

- Studied 24 examples of natural resource management projects labelled as the "Ecosystem Approach"
  3 marine, 2 coastal, most others watershed-ish

- Mixture of evidence – documents, interview, simple questionnaires

- Qualitative inductive approach to identifying challenges, using Nvivo10.
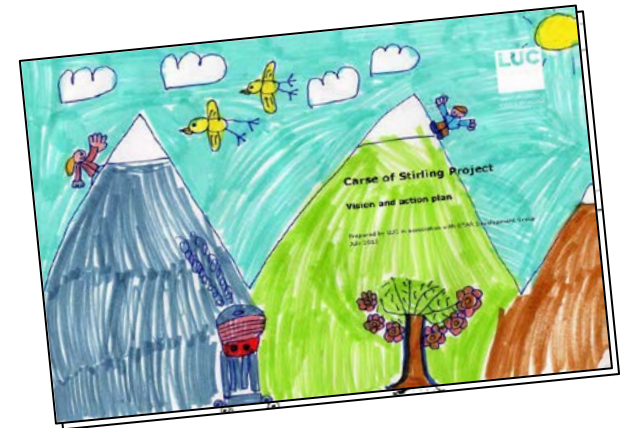
2) Our exploration

- Good news - most made progress

   - more systemic

   - more participatory

However

- Many did not get far beyond planning

- Reported a variety of challenges
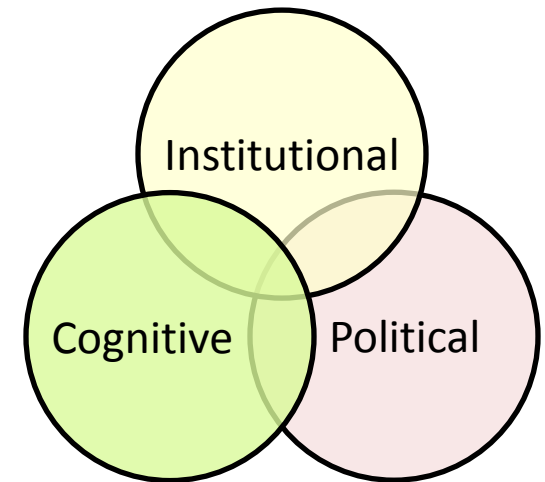
3) Exploring challenges

- Variety of challenges
  - Generic to project management
    - ▶ e.g. leadership
  - Familiar to ecosystem-based management
    - ▶ e.g. handling connections
  - Familiar to participatory management
    - ▶ e.g. facilitation skills

- An underlying theme
  - Difficult simply because new
  - Hindered by legacy?

3) Exploring challenges

Legacy effects

- Institutional

  - Statutory targets, funding cycles

  - Ways of working, personnel skills, norms

- Cognitive

  - Reductionist thinking

  - Existing data sets and means of organising them

- Political

  - Existing vested interests

  - Reinforces other legacy effects

3) Exploring challenges

- Arise from past projects, institutional arrangements

    - Formal & informal

    - Tangible & intangible

    - Interact with each other & natural system

- Not deterministic

    - Lockin or path dependency inappropriate

    - Not 'all bad'

    - Institutional inertia? Sticking points?

Institutional

Cognitive

Political
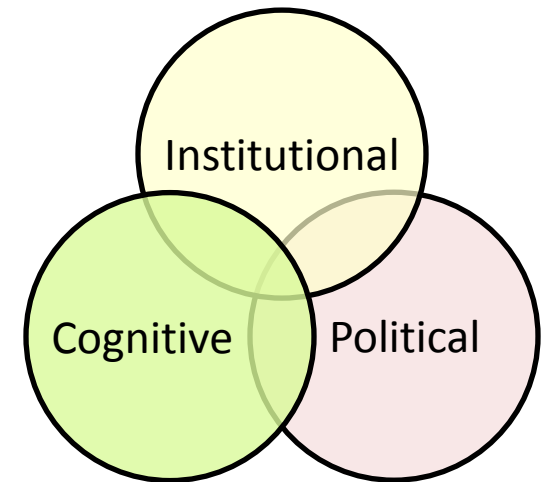
4) Implications & Conclusion

- Legacy effects matter

  - Useful to <u>explicitly</u> frame understanding in these terms

  - But not as path dependency

- Could inform new initiatives

  - Can inform attempts for transformation or transition
    e.g. some sticking points can be tackled by project managers

  - Other sticking points unlikely to succeed without higher-level
    institutional change e.g. fixed statutory targets

4) Implications & Conclusion

- If we understand sticking points,
  surely that will make it easier to get 'unstuck'?

- Need to look and act across levels
  Agencies cannot introduce
  a transformation without
  being part of it

Thanks!

Any questions?

http://www.hutton.ac.uk/projects/ecosystemapproachreview

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