I4ID and Innovation platforms in Africa: a research agenda

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The promise of innovation for inclusive development

1 **Inclusive innovation / innovation for inclusive development** refers to the **improvement of living conditions** and **creation of employment opportunities for the poor** through the development of **new products, services, processes and business models** aimed at resource poor communities.

2 Conceptualisations of inclusion in the innovation process may include **the problem statement; process of innovation, adoption or absorption of innovation, economic inclusion**

Unjani clinics - containers

- **Various types of projects** and ways on which these projects can be inclusive
- **How to scale?** Various business models and ways to overcome scaling – design thinking and **channels of delivery**;
- Leveraging existing scale – **e.g. Vodacom and GSK; public healthcare system**
- **Question: How do we leverage these?**

Working with what we have

1 "Grand Societal Experiment" was proposed (Rip). Here in particular a country like South Africa is in an interesting position as

- it has inter alia a relatively **sophisticated economy**,
- **financial sector**, good **universities** and
- a large number of **local and multinational corporations** that co-exists in a setting along with a
- **majority that is largely excluded from economic activity**, living in poverty and desperation.

2 Rip speaks of "**new regime of innovation**" is **driven through societal concern** regarding certain issues or achieving certain **societal goals**.
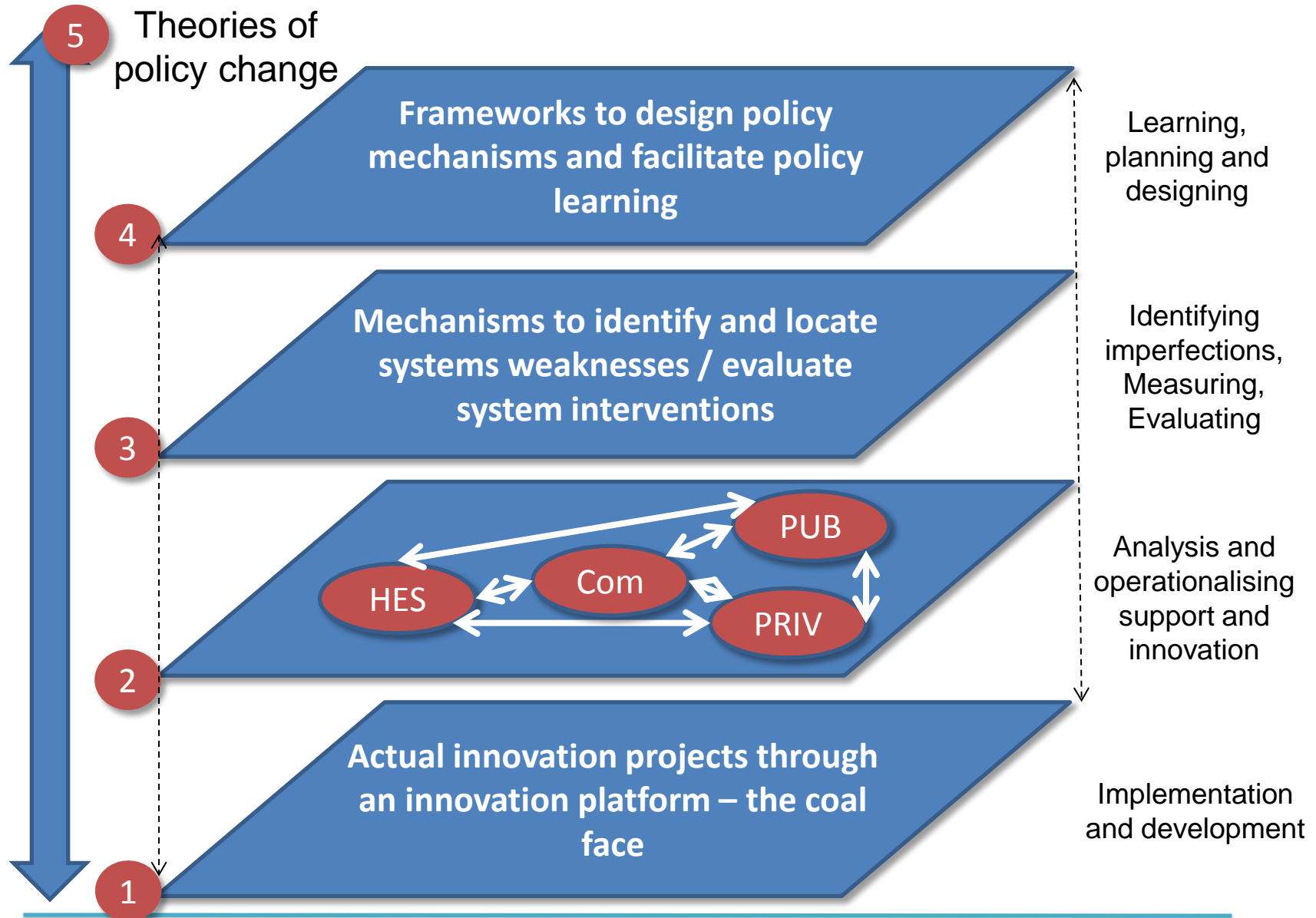
3 **Challenge-driven innovation**– an approach where instead of predominantly having a focus on a **technology push and developing technologies**, R&D and innovation funding is arranged in response to **pull-factors i.e. societies' greatest challenges.**
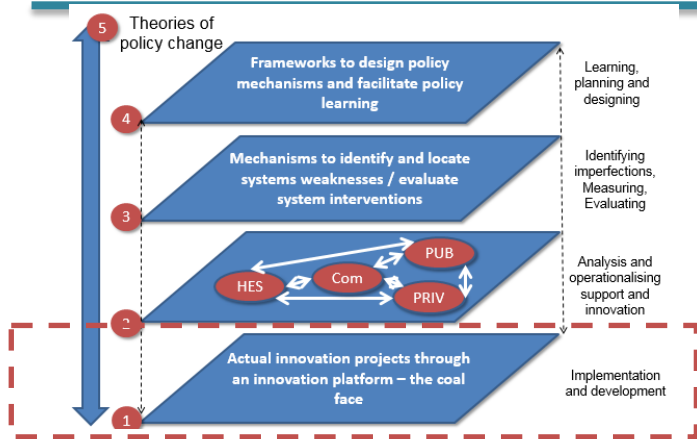
A "Grand Societal Experiment" – the requirements

- Engage and support a **new constellation of actors** where a **wider range of diversity** is required not only in the **presence of actors** but also the **options that are generated** through these interactions between these actors.

- **FH platform: University convenes- Chiefs; farmers; upcoming farmers; environmentalists; tourism – stakeholders in developing the Thyme valley**

- **New range of institutions** is required and a **"reinvention of the commons"** such as new forms of dealing with **Intellectual Property** which will have far reaching implications for the process of **knowledge execution and circulation**.

- **Create a platform – that will increase in meaning and depth over time – trust;**

- **Actors to engage in new ways** – spaces and places need to be created where this may happen often through **intermediaries, innovation platforms or through some traditional actors** taking on **new roles and approaches to engage**.

- **Traditional actor playing non traditional roles – new spaces and places = innovation platform**

- **New capabilities** which has implications for the **type and form of learning that needs to take place** – the form and focus of these learning activities will drive an improved understanding of issues also various perspectives and transformations toward constructive and productive interactions. **NON traditional role**
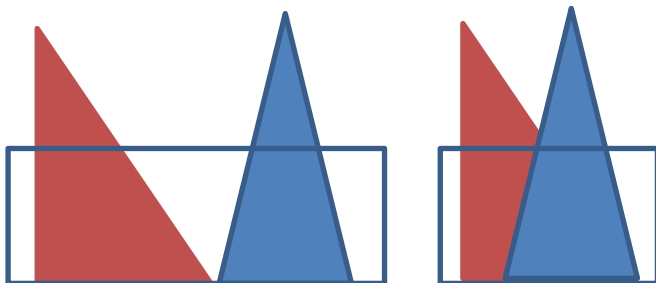
Overarching framework: How do we approach improved understanding?

5 Theories of policy change

Frameworks to design policy mechanisms and facilitate policy learning

Learning, planning and designing

4

Mechanisms to identify and locate systems weaknesses / evaluate system interventions

Identifying imperfections, Measuring, Evaluating

3

PUB

Com

HES

PRIV

Analysis and operationalising support and innovation

2

Actual innovation projects through an innovation platform – the coal face

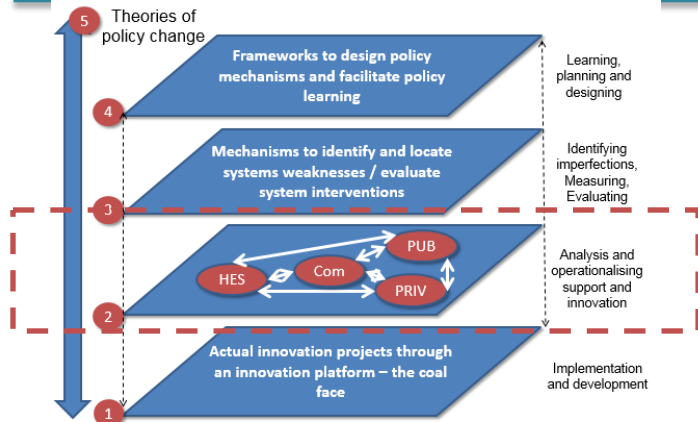Implementation and development

1

Level 1: Implementation and development of innovations

- *Level 1: The development of innovation specifically focussing on eHealth, and ICTs in Agriculture and Education*

- **How can we develop programmes that can scale?**

- **Mezzanine projects (Vodacom company)**
  - Platforms for open innovation
  - Rapid innovation platforms
  - Living labs

- **Platform Technologies – Engineering applications**
  - **Middleware platforms – secure data; storing data sovereignty issues, regulations**

- **Technology Transfer projects – especially private to public sector**

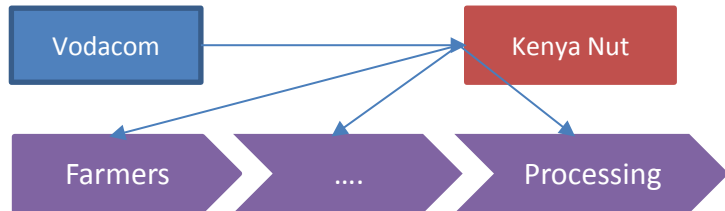# Level 2: Analysis and operationalising support and innovation

*Level 2: The research problem addressed on this level is the development of **analytical frameworks** for the identification and analysis of innovation opportunities and its practical implementation*
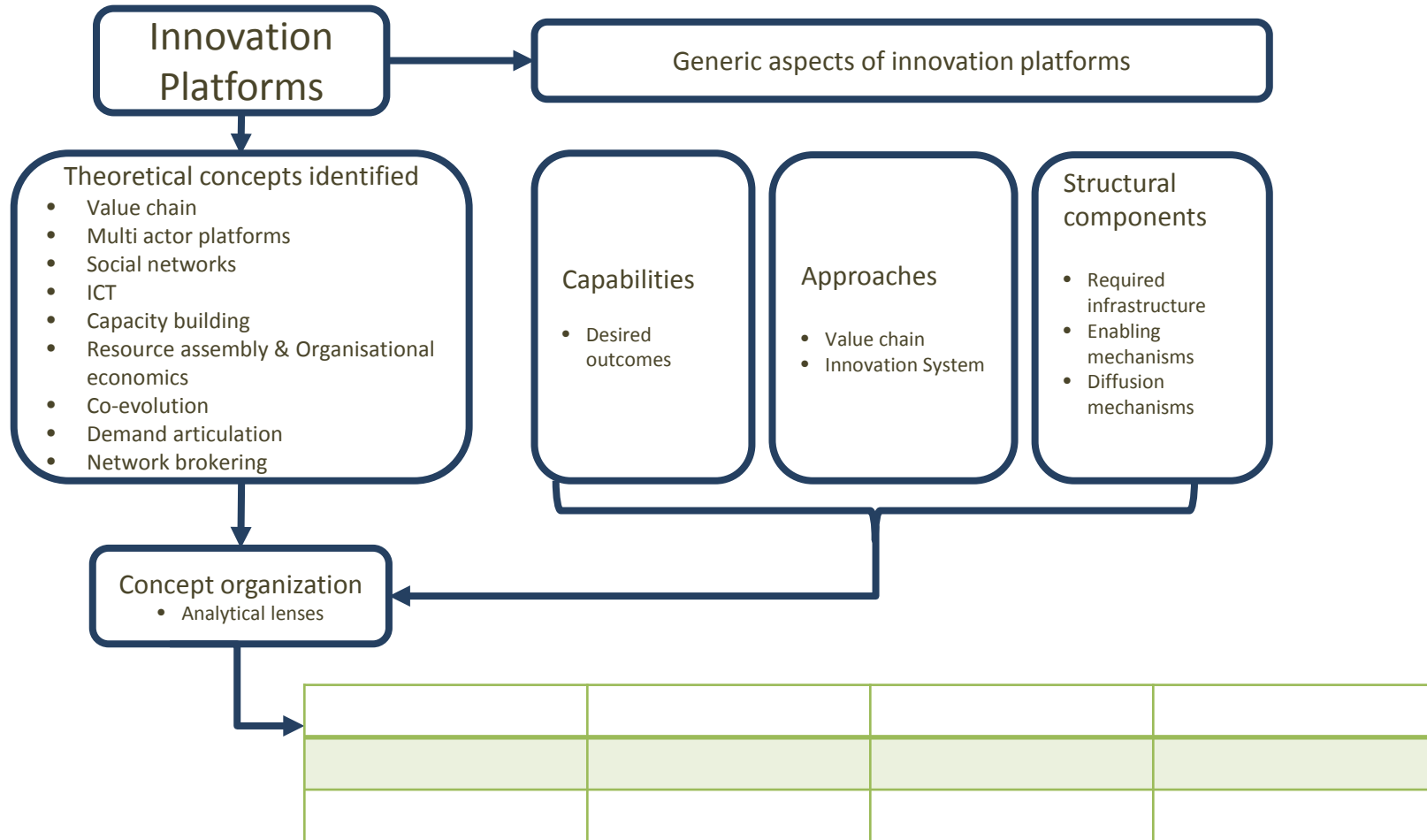
How can we discover and find ways to operationalise I4ID opportunities?
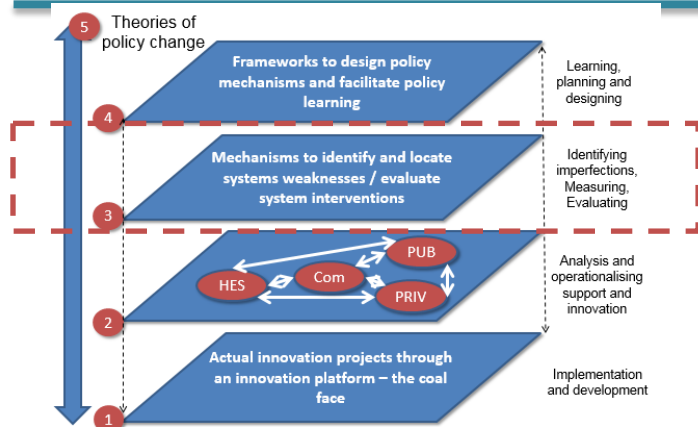
Projects:

1. The nature of University-driven I4ID – recent publication
2. **Evaluating Inclusive Innovation System Performance:** eHealth systems project – developed framework for analysing and evaluating systemic weaknesses in inclusive innovation systems
3. Healthcare and Agricultural innovation platforms programme
4. Fort Hare I4ID platform project

Level 2: a Systematic review of Innovation platforms

Innovation Platforms → **Generic aspects of innovation platforms**

Theoretical concepts identified
- Value chain
- Multi actor platforms
- Social networks
- ICT
- Capacity building
- Resource assembly & Organisational economics
- Co-evolution
- Demand articulation
- Network brokering

Capabilities
- Desired outcomes

Approaches
- Value chain
- Innovation System

Structural components
- Required infrastructure
- Enabling mechanisms
- Diffusion mechanisms
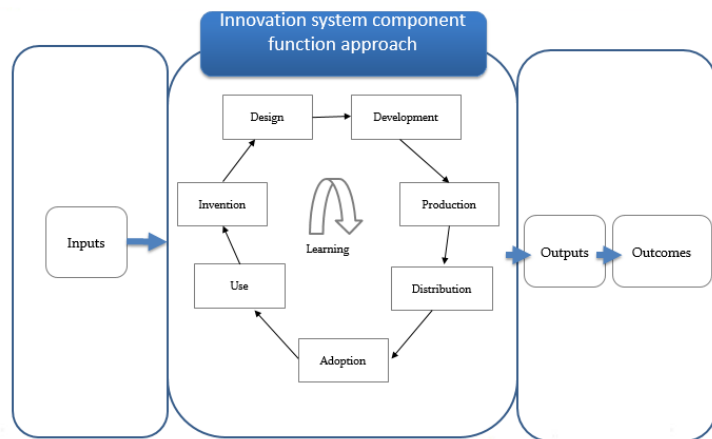
Concept organization
- Analytical lenses

Level 3: Measuring, Monitoring and Evaluating

*Level 3: The research problem addressed on this level is the development of **M&E case studies, framework, typologies and tools; learning from what is working and also – how interventions are successful / or not***
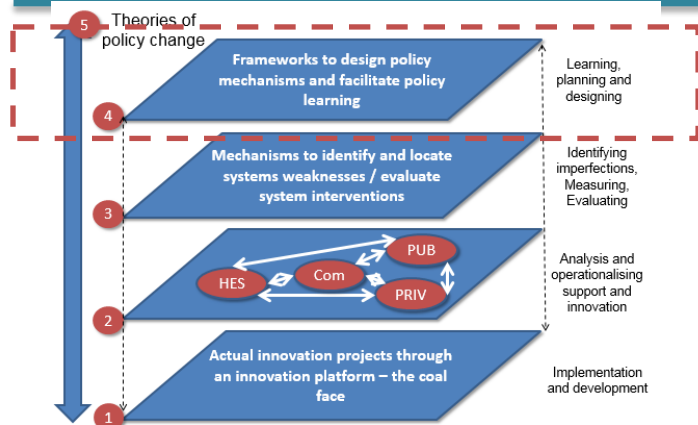
How can we measure and evaluate impact of inclusive innovation projects?

Projects

- How can we evaluate these University-driven I4ID projects? Opening the black box

- Enormous opportunity in this area!

- A focus on large scale programmes – often poorly monitored and evaluated – has implication for business cases and achieving outcomes

Level 4: Learning and policy learning

Level 3: The research problem addressed on this level is the development of supporting policy-learning e.g. evidence-based policy approaches – setting up the system to use evidence and to learn to do things better

How can we best support policy- and implementation-learning to strengthen innovation programmes?

Projects

- Regional Innovation System project – WCDEDT – policy learning framework - Systemic instruments
- Creation of community of practice and regular interactions – recent workshops and policy discussion

- **Indicators:** We will develop a range of lenses and methods to consider issues in the system – indicating aspects of systems performance – will lead to indicators, causal thinking and analysis

- **S&T and development** – I4ID and how we can have a more fair distribution of wealth

- **Research impact evaluation:** How to evaluate and measure impact of I4Id projects

- **Science and innovation policy** - obvious

- **Theories of policy change** – THIS is a cross-cutting issue and I think we will only be able to do this type of work if we have understanding of the system on various levels

Next steps: Approved SciSTIP projects

Project 1 – University-driven Innovation for inclusive development (UDI4ID) in Africa

- To what extent and how do universities fulfil the roles of, for example, initiator, catalyst, support system and driving force for I4Id?

- How can Universities play a larger role in strengthening I4ID systems?

- To what extent and how are innovation-related impacts monitored, assessed or measured by staff or stakeholders directly involved in UDITI projects?

Project 2 - Innovation platforms and intermediaries

- What are functioning models for innovation platforms and specifically the role of various actors in establishing and operating such platforms?

- How is capacity development learning and scaling managed?

- How is evaluation of the development of these framework and resulting innovations managed?

Project 3: Monitoring and Evaluation

- What frameworks and conceptual tools exist to support the evaluation of I4ID programmes in Southern Africa?

- How impact management and assessment of I4Id is projects in Africa done and supported?

- How can this work support a longer-term 'Africa' research agenda?

Next steps: Approved SciSTIP projects

Project 4: Analytical approaches and modelling studies

- Exploring the contribution of **Systems thinking and System Dynamic modelling** of inclusive innovation systems; This is expected the carry forward the work that has been done with regards to developing analytical frameworks for such projects

- We propose that this discussion now be taken forward to develop a case study-based congruence analysis study to develop a more practical framework for uncovering I4Id opportunities - **GVC and IS approaches may be integrated**

- Thank you!