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WRI ROSS CENTER PLANNING RETREAT: DAY 4

April 26, 2024



Monday 4/22	Day 1: Tuesday 4/23	Day 2: Wednesday 4/24 <i>(office)</i>	Day 3: Thursday 4/25	Day 4: Friday 4/26		
Arrival in The Hague	Breakfast					
	Welcome Session <i>(45 min)</i>	Roundtable II: Scaling our Work <i>(75 min)</i>		RPT Workshop <i>(90 min)</i>	Side Session IV <i>(90 min)</i>	Bringing Strategic Focus to External Engagements <i>(60 min)</i>
	Retreat Overview & Objectives <i>(30 min)</i>					Managing Organizational Growth & Financial Health <i>(45 min)</i>
	Focusing on Country Transitions <i>(75 min)</i>	Livable Neighborhoods Pillar Workshop <i>(90 min)</i>	Side Session II <i>(90 min)</i>	Integrated Climate Action Workshop <i>(75 min)</i>	Retreat Summary <i>(60 min)</i>	
	Lunch					
	Roundtable 1: Future of the Cities Transition <i>(60 min)</i>		Partnering with WRI Europe (30 minutes)		Elevating Research, Data, & Learning <i>(60 min)</i>	Begin Departures
	Climate Resilience Pillar Workshop <i>(90 min)</i>	Side Session I <i>(90 min)</i>	Connective Mobility Pillar Workshop <i>(90 min)</i>	Side Session III <i>(90 min)</i>	Fundraising Strategy <i>(45 min)</i>	
	Flex Meeting Time <i>(45 min)</i>		Deep Dive Workshop <i>(90 min)</i>		Site Visit + Travel to Rogier's House for Dinner (3 hours)	
	Opening Dinner: Milu		Optional Dinner		Closing Dinner at Rogier's	

Full Group Discussions

Workshops

Awareness-Raising



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Road to COP30: Bringing Strategic Focus to External Engagement

Planning Retreat | The Hague | April 2024

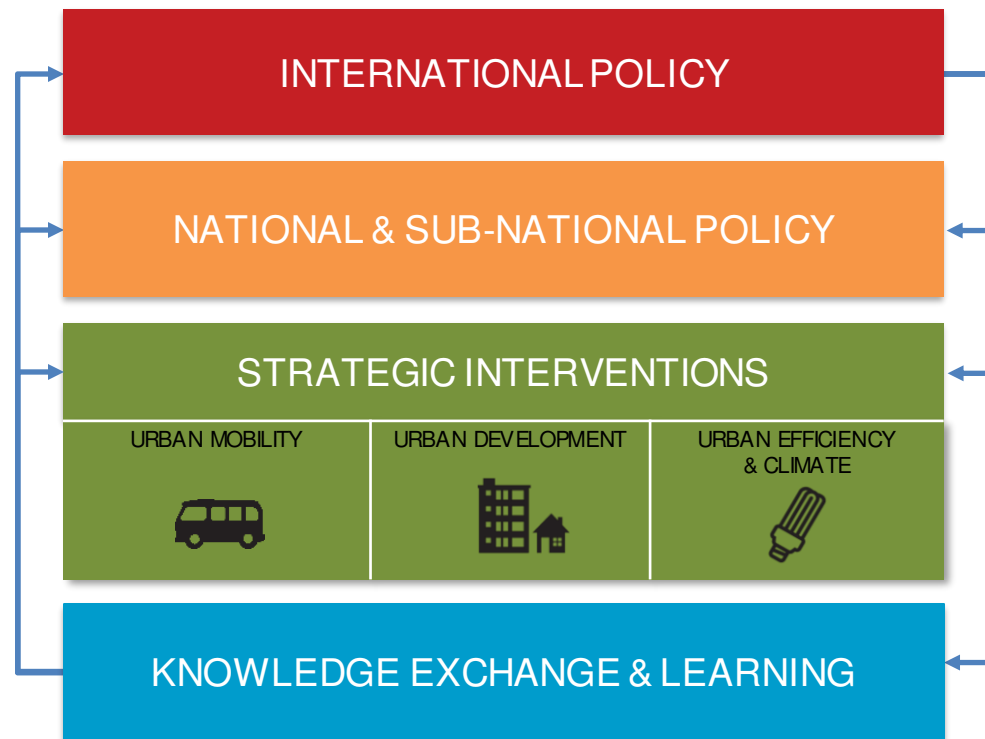
SESSION GOALS

1. Share best practices and lessons learned on strategic engagement
2. Build shared understanding around opportunities for external engagement
3. Collectively reflect on priorities and strategic focus

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

- What it is:
 - **Relationship management of key stakeholders** (i.e., policymakers, partners, donors, communities) for **impact** (i.e., funding, project implementation, reputation...)
- Why it matters:
 - Raise our **global profile and influence** as thought leaders/trusted partners and conveners
 - Multiply our **partners** for project implementation and dissemination
 - Increase funding **opportunities** to advance our mission

HOW WE APPROACH STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT



Contributing to international policy and development agendas, leveraging sizable investments, and engaging in strategic convening

Influencing national, regional and local laws, regulations, and financial mechanisms that enable and scale urban sustainable solutions

Providing technical assistance and bringing best practices around urban mobility, development and efficiency to improve the quality of solutions.

Systematizing and disseminating knowledge and expertise through products and trainings to scale up solutions and good practices.

SHARING CHALLENGES, LESSONS, BEST PRACTICES



WRI Brasil

SHARING CHALLENGES, LESSONS, BEST PRACTICES



Cities4Forests

SHARING CHALLENGES, LESSONS, BEST PRACTICES

Clean Air Catalyst

Clean Air Catalyst works to curb
air pollution, tackle climate change
and improve

Clean Air Catalyst

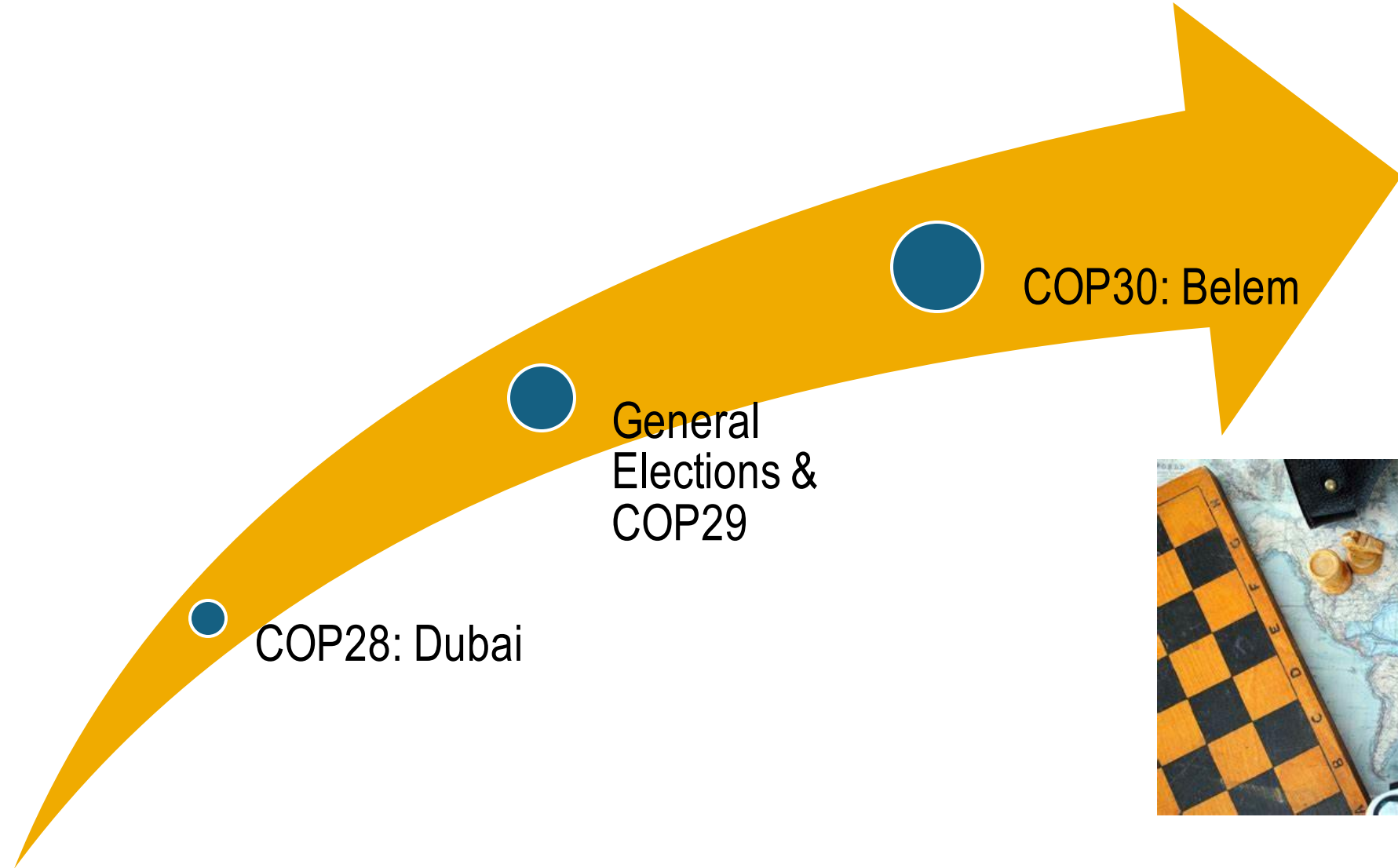


SHARING CHALLENGES, LESSONS, BEST PRACTICES



ACWA Fund + Platform

MOMENTS OF OPPORTUNITY



KEY MOMENTS FOR 2024 & 2025



COP28: LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION SUMMIT + CHAMP INITIATIVE

- COP28 a “gamechanger” for elevating role of cities/subnational action
- Success of Local Climate Action Summit – 200+ mayors and local leaders
- CHAMP Initiative – 70+ countries committed to strengthen multilevel climate action by working more closely with subnational leaders to incorporate urban climate action
 - Role of cities in national climate action plans part of the overall narrative and a pillar in WRI’s messaging

BUILD UP TOWARDS COP30

- CHAMP 2.0 – Adding urban content into NDCs and increasing collaboration in priority countries; WRI leading on Colombia, Rwanda, Kenya, and Brazil (co-lead)
- How do we channel and consolidate strategic engagement via the CHAMP platform?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do we need in order to ensure that we deliver on urban climate action at COP30?
2. How do we best use the opportunity to link our local/national agenda and ambition into global agenda and vice versa?
3. How do we enhance strategic engagement for in-country transitions? What support is needed at the global level?

Managing Organization Growth & Financial Health


Cities Planning Retreat
The Hague, April 26, 2024



AGENDA

- Cities team staff and budget FY20-FY24
- PPMO Needs Assessment Working Group
- ET Committee for Operations & Financial Health
- Cities Growth Scenarios

STAFF AND BUDGET – VIPPER: MICROSOFT POWER BI



VIPPER
FY24

Home Staff Counter Financials Funding Pipeline

Welcome to ViPPER FY24!

Useful Links: [PPER+](#) [ViPPER Archive](#)

What is ViPPER?

The Visual Planning, Performance, Evaluation, & Reporting Tool (ViPPER) is an operational data dashboard that allows users to explore programmatic data from across the Ross Center for Sustainable Cities. It is maintained by the Cities Program and Project Management Office (PPMO) and Operations teams.

What data can I find here?

ViPPER FY24 lets you explore the Cities Program's projects, deliverables, staff distribution, financials, funding pipeline, and the cities we work with across the world.

Where does this data come from?

- The [project database](#) and [deliverable progress dashboard](#) pull data from PPER (discontinued in FY24) and Asana's Cities Program Portfolio. [These tabs are under development as we transition from PPER to Asana and will be shared in May 2024.](#)
- **Staff Counter** data is sourced from WRI Operations staff across our network.
- **Financial** data comes from the quarterly financial reviews conducted by Ops.
- **Funding Pipeline** data is pulled from Salesforce by Funds Development.
- **The Cities We Work With Map** pulls its list of cities from the data compiled from the annual Ross Report. If a city is missing project data, that's because it was in the Ross Report but not our PPER/ViPPER records. [Data for 2024 will be shared in May 2024.](#)

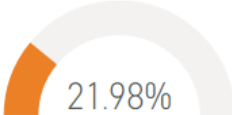
How recent is this data?

For Q1: Each tab displays when the data was last updated. Data for Q2 (Jan-Mar 2024) will be made available in April and May.

I noticed a bug in this site, an error in the data, have ideas for this dashboard, or other feedback. Who should I reach out to?

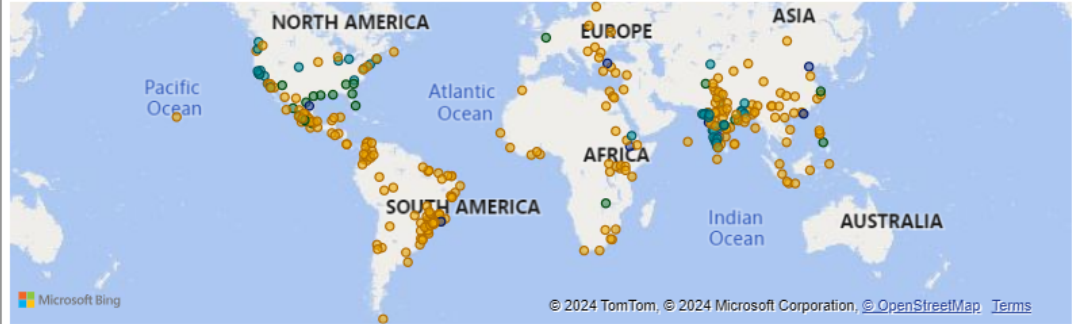
Contact Mary Helen Wood by email (mary.wood@wri.org) or Teams! All feedback and suggestions are welcome. :)

Quick facts about the Cities Program:

Q1 Project and Deliverable data are unavailable in Q1 as we transition from PPER to Asana. Check back in Q2!	\$60.08M Total FY24 Budget	Q1 Burn Rate  21.98%
	\$88.66M \$ in Funding Pipeline	568 Cities Staff Members

Cities We Worked With in FY23: 317

Level of Engagement ● Deep Dive ● Engaged ● National Level ● Targeted

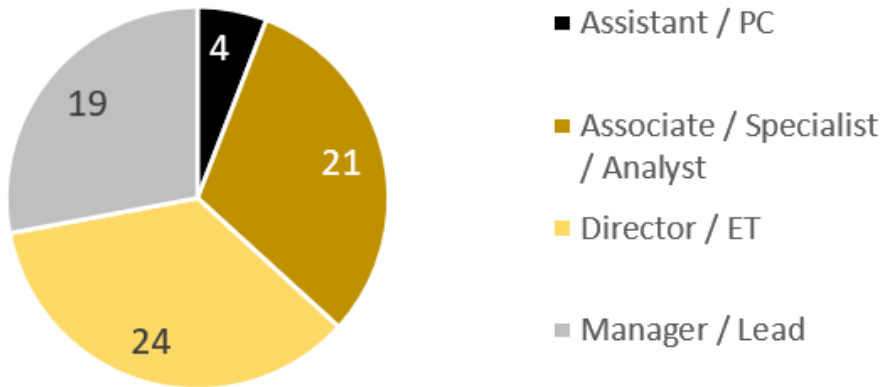


Microsoft Bing © 2024 TomTom, © 2024 Microsoft Corporation, © OpenStreetMap, Terms

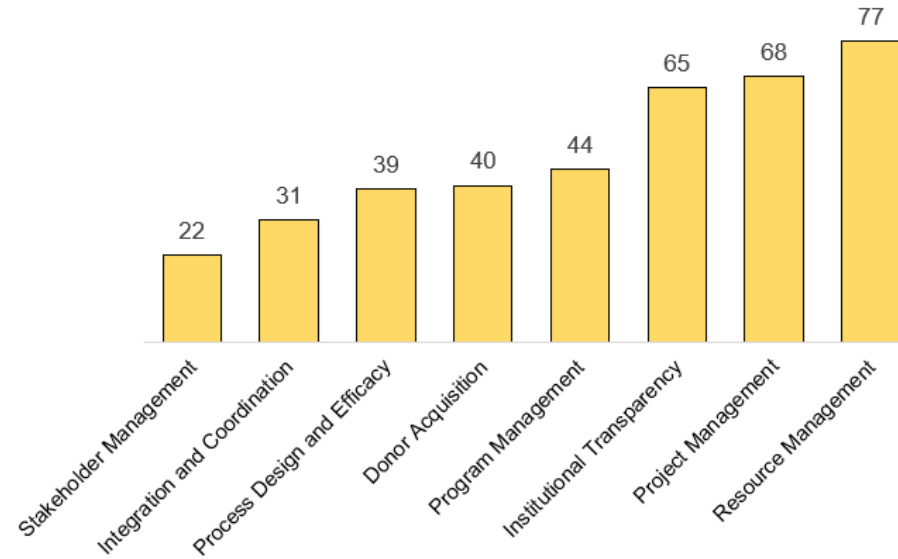
PPMO NEEDS ASSESSMENT: 384 needs!!

It is a diagnostic tool that was used to identify organizational needs and gaps.

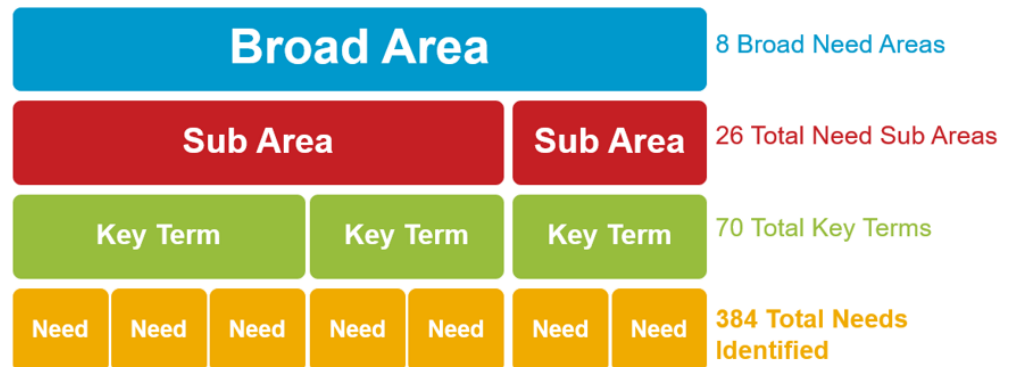
Staff Surveyed
(69 people through 28 interviews)



Needs by Broad Area



Needs Classification



PROBLEM STATEMENT

- **Cap gaps** affect our ability to deliver and, in extreme situations, to pursue opportunities
- Lack of funding, overcommitment and staff burnout as result of poor **proposal budget preparation** (we are not saying 'no')
- Covering cap gaps with Ross flex funds reduces the overall allocation for new opportunities and strategic investments
- **Core functions** covered by Ross flex funds reduces the overall allocation for other projects

PPMO WORKING GROUP

GROUP #1: Funding Restrictions

- How can we manage donor CAP GAPS in our proposal budgets in a way that least affect the delivery of our work and core teams funding?
- Are we negotiating with donors for better overhead /indirect costs grant terms?
- How can we enforce a go-no go decision process for proposals that do not fully fund indirect costs?

We have been doing swaps with flex funds, but it's a lot of work and sometimes we run out of "hours" from Leadership Team. We lack a standard criteria agreed (a policy) that every team should follow and not have questions about it.

if cap gap, we need make it clear to the donor that we will need to allocate flexible funding to cover the overhead. That the cost does not disappear because they don't want to pay it.

another direction is to knock on WRI's door for unrestricted funds....

WE NEED TO SAY NO! And we need to create a policy backed by the ET to hold the policy (no exceptions) to make it enforceable.

Government funds are not likely to change their rules. We may be able to negotiate with some donors, not all.

Create a clear process for all teams to know how to deal with cap gaps, including political aspects of the negotiation.

Proposal preparation guidance should include different recommendations for more complicated / restricted awards

These kinds of OPS considerations are not considered strongly by program staff, so we are often committed to proposals before assessing the operational difficulties of managing the potential award. Missing a go/no-go criteria for these kinds of restrictive proposals

	Need to be addressed	Proposed solutions*	Agreed Solutions
	Description	Action required by the Focus Group	
	Identify temporary solutions and support the implementation, while comprehensive and long-lasting solutions	Comment: We have been doing swaps with Flex Funds, but it's a lot of work and sometimes we run out of "hours" from Leadership Team. Comment: The issue in the case of G22 they are questioning more the staff allocation for those core team members. Current actions: we are justifying those positions the best possible way. And	No additional action, Solution 1 under implementation.
How can we manage donor CAP GAPS in our proposal budgets in a way that least affect WRI's overhead and core teams funding?		Solution 1: develop new policy that considers the following: (i) if cap gap, we need make it clear to the donor that we will need to allocate flexible funding to cover the overhead. That the cost does not disappear because they don't want to pay it; (ii) how to deal with cap gaps, including political aspects of the negotiation. Solution 2: In the proposal template, add disclaimer for donors about how grants with CAP GAPS & heavy financial restrictions require more staff time to manage the grant itself., including the grant closing process. Solution 3: In the proposal template, add disclaimer for donors about how grants with CAP GAPS & heavy financial restrictions require more staff time to manage the grant itself.	Agreed Solution 1: create a process, guidance and structure to negotiate donor cap-gaps that includes the following: (i) Re-negotiate budget lines with donors, making them aware that there are costs that do not go away, because they are needed to do business. Transparency of the costs with the donors; Agreed Solution 2: Bring Cost and Pricing into the conversations on cap gaps, as soon as they are identified; Agreed Solution 3: If the cap gap is not manageable, do not go ahead with the project; (iv) develop the criteria to "say no" and what's the balance before we say no; Agreed Solution 4: In the proposal template, add disclaimer for donors about how grants with CAP GAPS & heavy financial restrictions require more staff time to manage the grant itself., including the grant closing process.
		Solution 4: In the proposal template, add disclaimer for donors about how grants with CAP GAPS & heavy financial restrictions require more staff time to manage the grant itself.	New solution A: diversifying awards within a team (having flex funds available) so the team can do internal swaps themselves without including core functions New solution B: at the institutional level, promote push back conversations with donors, on budget lines (overhead costs) that must be financed for the project to run.
		Solution 5: In the proposal template, add disclaimer for donors about how grants with CAP GAPS & heavy financial restrictions require more staff time to manage the grant itself.	See Agreed Solution 4
	Identify temporary solutions and support the implementation, while comprehensive and long-lasting solutions	Comment: Many are centrally managed Solution 1 (under implementation): SWAPS: 1) With Core GSM Staff, 2) With limited project teams with flex funding ADD to Solution 3: in the proposal template add a text with a justification for core functions staff on projects to provide donors if they ask why O&M	No additional action, solution under implementation.
How can we overcome barriers to payment for project management due to donor restriction on how much can be spent on PM and/or CAP GAPS?		Solution 1 (under development in the PM action plan): Be specific with the tasks that the PM team will be supporting to Solution 4: make donors aware of gap being caused by the donor policies. Solution 5: knock on WRI's door for unrestricted funds. Comment: Projects with cap gaps generate higher cost/ LOE to PM them	add to Agreed Solution 4 No action required, solution addressed in PM action plan Agreed Solution 1 again add to Agreed Solution 1
Can we create a process to negotiate with donors for better overhead /indirect costs grant terms?	Identify temporary solutions and support the implementation, while comprehensive and long-lasting solutions	Solution 1: GNC can support teams with the negotiation of grants terms & restrictions as well as CAP GAPS. How to Comment: depends on the donor. Government funds are not likely to Solution 2: too not have any experience working with restrictive donors or cap gaps (yet), however, in the proposals that have been a part of Solution 3: WorkFlow in Akana: We are currently including a step in the proposal Solution 4: WorkFlow in Akana: We are currently including a step in the proposal Solution 5: knock on WRI's door for unrestricted funds. Comment: WE NEED TO SAY NO! AND we need to create a policy backed by the ET to hold the policy (no exceptions) to make it enforceable. (We have the tools to)	add to New Solution B and Agreed Solution 2 .
Can we include a go-no go decision process for proposals that do not fully fund indirect costs?		Solution 1: GNC can support teams with the negotiation of grants terms & restrictions as well as CAP GAPS. How to Comment: depends on the donor. Government funds are not likely to Solution 2: too not have any experience working with restrictive donors or cap gaps (yet), however, in the proposals that have been a part of Solution 3: WorkFlow in Akana: We are currently including a step in the proposal Solution 4: WorkFlow in Akana: We are currently including a step in the proposal Solution 5: knock on WRI's door for unrestricted funds. Comment: WE NEED TO SAY NO! AND we need to create a policy backed by the ET to hold the policy (no exceptions) to make it enforceable. (We have the tools to)	Comment: solutions in cells G22 (risk assessment) and G23 (workflow in Akana) are the next step of agreed solution 4 (develop criteria to say no) Agreed Solution 5: share and promote the usage of solutions 4 and solutions in cells G22 (risk assessment) and G23 (workflow in Akana).
	Identify long-lasting solutions and support the implementation	Solution 1 (again): develop new policy that considers the following: (i) if cap gap, we need make it clear to the donor	add to Agreed Solution 3 add to Agreed Solution 1 , considering how subgrant fee cap gaps can be addressed (discuss sharing the burden with central finance and/or subgrantees)

AREAS WE ARE WORKING ON

1. Funding Restrictions (cap gaps)

- a. create a process, guidance and structure to negotiate donor cap gaps (including re-negotiate budget lines with donors and transparency of the costs)
- b. if the cap gap is not manageable, do not go ahead with the project; develop “go/no-go” criteria

2. Core Function Budget

- a. develop a financial mechanism to fund the core functions and reduce the flex funds dependability
- b. if less Ross funds are used to support the core functions, it frees more flex funding to be distributed throughout the program, teams and Country Offices

3. Proposal Preparation

- a. develop a proposal budget guidance, grant template (easily translated to TM1), and training on: budget creation, budget lines, WRI's policies and practices, overheads, min. core function support, and be informed/follow grant restrictions
- b. develop and deploy project structuring; training for all technical staff that develop proposals

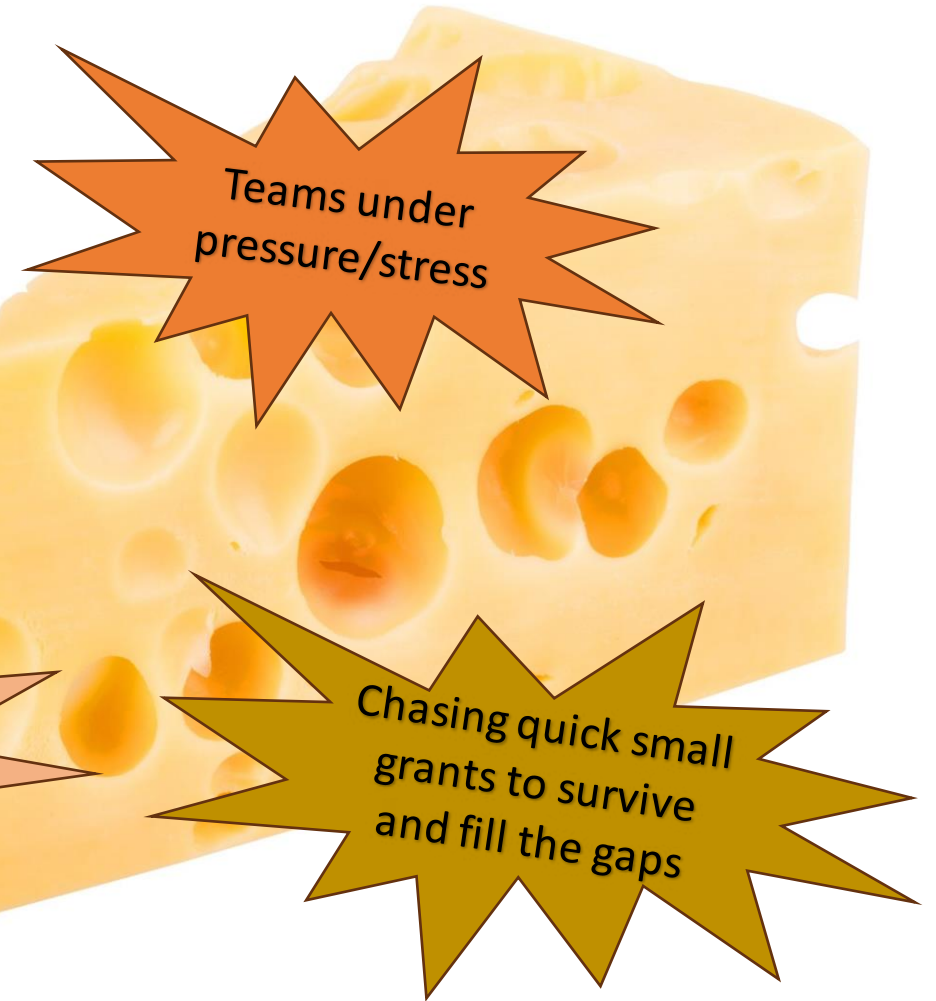
NEXT STEPS

- Combine PPMO needs assessment WG with ET Committee for Ops and Financial Health
- Elevate recommendations to the ET

HOW FUNDING LOOKS LIKE NOW

- Overall, a great cheese! We are growing in size, and we look good!
- But we are growing very fast, not allowing time to “catch up”
- Looking inside, we see holes (gaps) in some teams:
 - Cap gaps
 - Funding cliffs
 - Delay on renewals
 - Unfunded work
 - Staff turnover

Not saying NO:
accepting smaller new
projects to fill the
holes

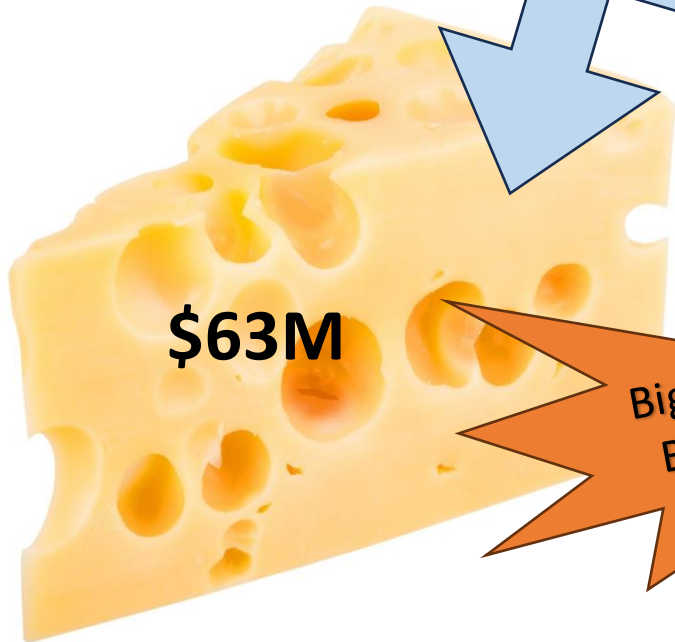


CITIES GROWTH SCENARIOS

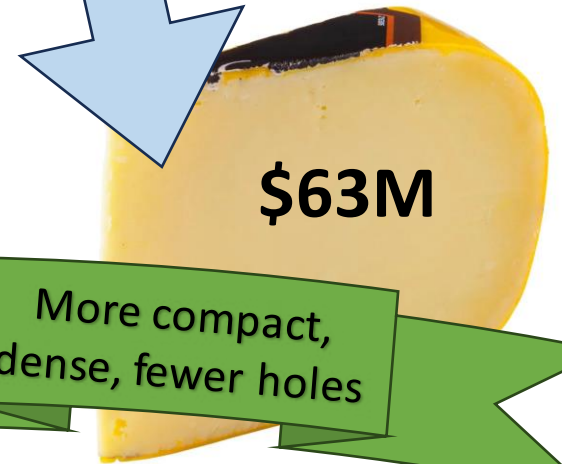


- Keep “swiss cheese” approach
- Confirm new funds following opportunities in different areas
- Fill the holes as much as possible with swaps and flex allocations

- Move to “gouda cheese” approach
- **Avoid opening/actively pursuing new areas of work**
- Repackage, create new narrative for existing work
- Active and targeted fundraising on filling the gaps (restricted and flex funds)



Bigger the cheese,
Bigger the holes



More compact,
dense, fewer holes

REFLECTIONS AND PROVOCATIONS

- How do we want to grow the Cities team:
 - Continue to **expand** the Swiss cheese?
 - Or **densify** into a Gouda cheese?
- Do we want to keep current model (Swiss cheese) and commit to allocate flex funds and do swaps to cover the funding gaps?
- Are we ready to shift the way we work and focus on maturing areas of work (addressing the holes/gaps) before expanding / pursuing new lines of work?
- Should we develop criteria to better define what we say YES to and what we avoid?

WRAP UP











5 POINTS

- **Retreat** is long overdue
- Outlook: deliver on **strategic priorities** and think beyond 20 months
- **Cities transition** pillars are shaping up
- **Integration** is innovation and WRI's big opportunity
- **In-country transition** requires dedicated work. WRI+WRI Ross Center = key

WE NEED YOUR PLANS TO THINK ABOUT...

ON-THE-GROUND IMPACT

Cross-sector as well as sector-based interventions.

SCALING

Via Country Transitions and collaboration with Local Coalitions, Global Initiatives and WRI's Enabling Systems.

STRATEGIC FUNDRAISING & PARTNERSHIPS

Position projects as the seed for larger cross-cutting funding with key partners.

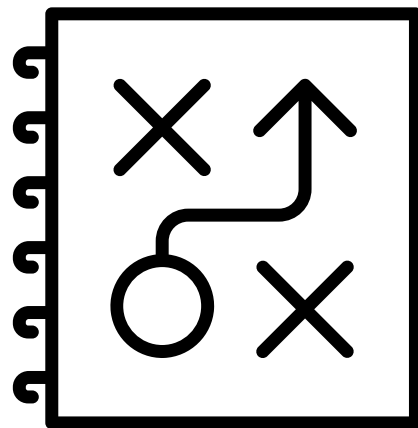
KNOWLEDGE & DATA

Few and strategic knowledge products, and bi-products.

REPLICABILITY

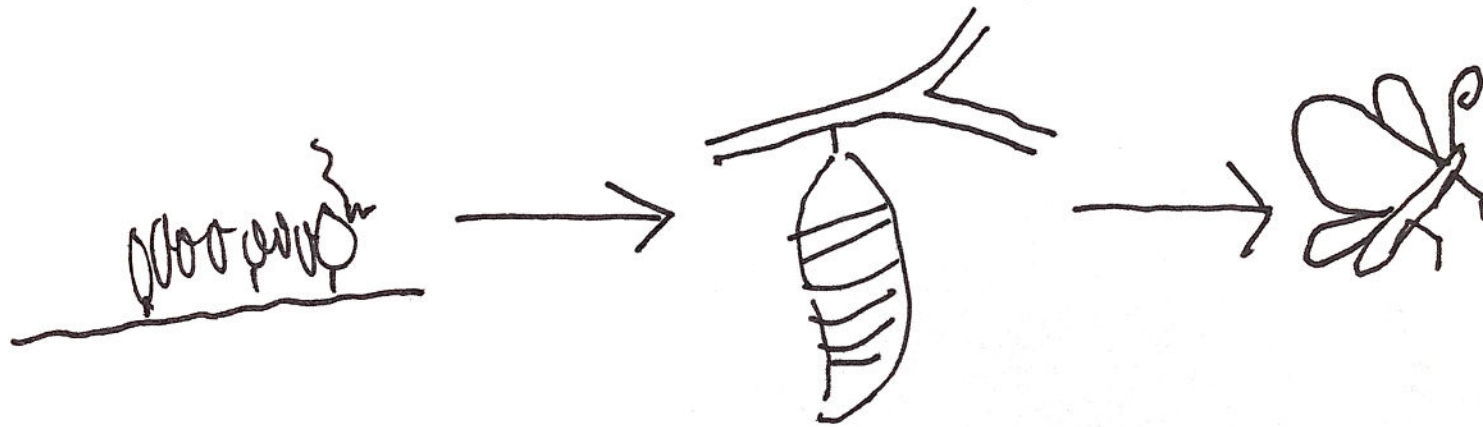
Mature, document and disseminate WRI's unique approach.

WE NEED YOUR PLANS TO THINK ABOUT...



First draft by May 3rd

BECOMING THE CHANGE



BECOMING THE CHANGE

TECNICAL CHALLENGES

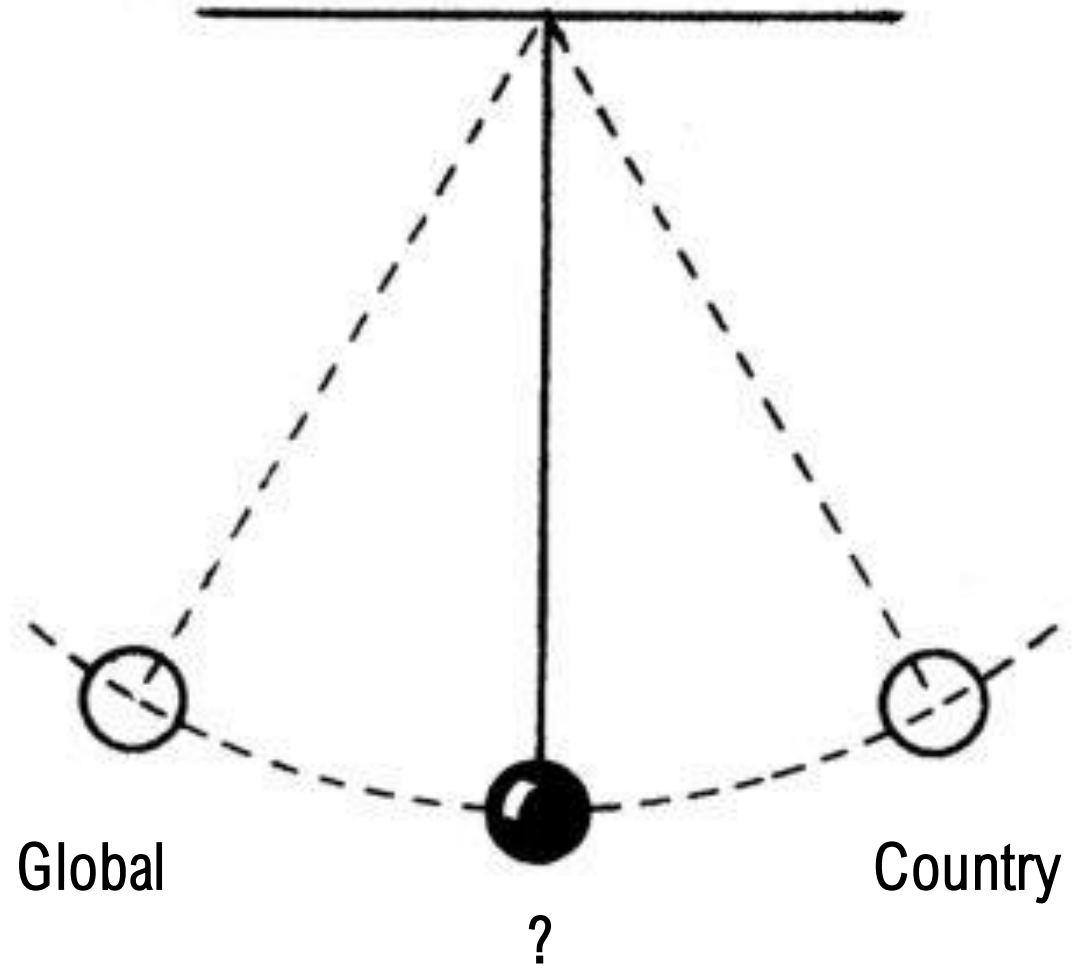
- The problem (and solution) is known, easy to identify, and often recognizable
- The responsibility is with experts and authorities
- Obstacles are usually resource-limited, i.e. time and money

ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES

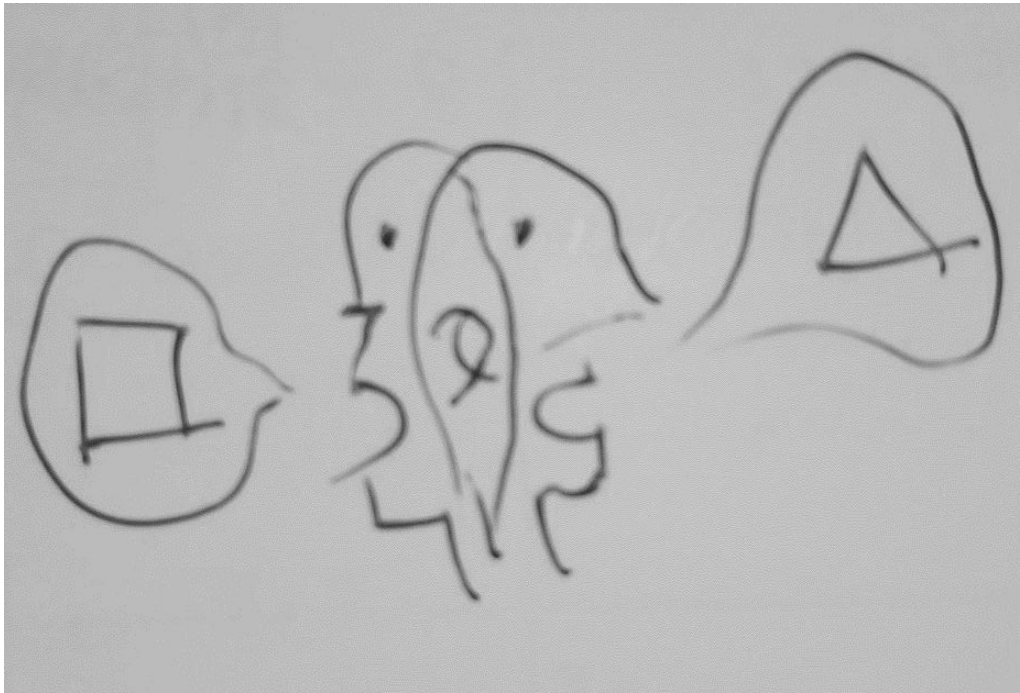
- The problem is often unknown or hard to identify. The solution is unknown and requires learning
- Responsibility is with those affected by the challenge (stakeholders)
- The obstacles are less tangible—hearts and minds, values, loyalties and relationships

DELIVERING WRI'S NEW STRATEGY

What's the right balance?



UPDATED NARRATIVES



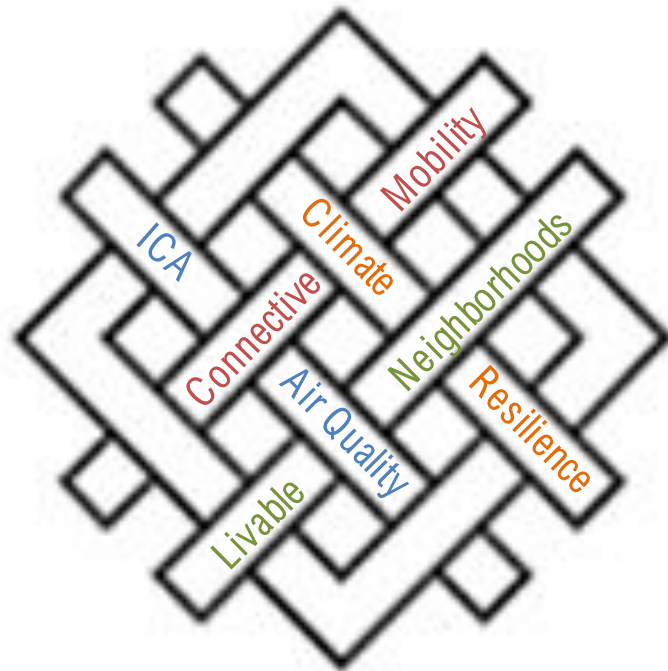
**How do we adapt them
to different audiences?**

THE WRI APPROACH TO CITIES

How do we get
others to know
our work better?



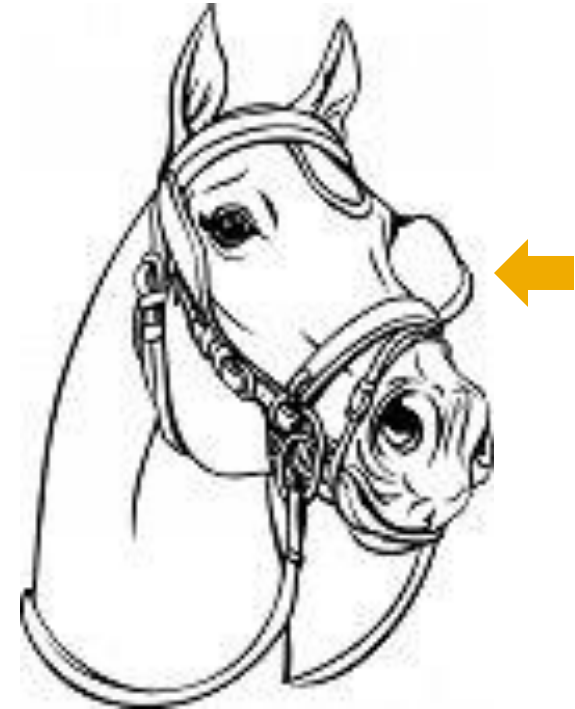
INTEGRATION & COLLABORATION



How do we do it better and more consistently?

ALIGNMENT VS FLEXIBILITY

Who does “disciplined
entrepreneurialism” look
like for us?



NEXT STEPS

Session	Action Items	Who?
Country WRI's New Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applying Systems Change to Countries Aligning Resources to Strategy Shared Understanding + Learning on Systems Change 	ET and Senior Managers
Scaling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated framing to scale up action and facilitate implementation 	RKE, Strategy, Jaya, Toni, Adriana, Henrique
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working group to continue the conversation about finance. 	Leila, Pablo,
WRI Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find the local- global partnerships- access to EU funding. Explore how WRI Europe can help advance programmatic priorities 	Stientje, Santiago, WRI Cities
Fundraising Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on larger proposals & streamlining the smaller proposals Coordinate and get ready for longer proposal development and implementation periods Leverage the cities narrative and the various events 	Global Development & Partnerships, Workstreams and Country Offices.
Elevating Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify up to 2 knowledge products that can be developed through combined funding from multiple teams for engagements in multiple countries Identify key strategic topics where we can facilitate an exchange of lessons learned across geographies and design learning products (e.g., CAP implementation) Regular engagement of RKE with country & work stream directors/managers to identify research and learning needs to avoid missing opportunities. 	RKE with country/work stream leads.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create guidance/ideas for engagement and learning products that utilize our research in a continuing way to scale our impact. 	RKE, Comms, PMEL, Impact teams

NEXT STEPS

Session	Action Items	Who?
Livable Neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build out a clear narrative and our role on livable neighborhoods and roadmap of implementation • Include "health and safety" component and design metrics to measure qualitative impacts • Go through the TOCs of livable neighborhoods and drill down on the goals and objectives. 	Pablo, Mariana, John-Rob, Henrique, Sudeshna, Daniel, Roxana, Bety, Paula
Climate Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh narrative for our next big pitch • Knowledge transfer & sharing between the different geographies • Coordinating and building expertise on finance. • Research- combined publication to map out what is happening across Country Offices 	Todd, Pablo, James, Hellen, Amanda, Jaya,
Connective Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a compelling narrative and a common consolidated ask. • Think about bigger ticket items for the energy- transport projects • Landscape analysis to explore the connections between urban planning; climate & finance; energy and Transport. 	Felipe, Cristina, Claudia, Ben, Paula, Daniel, Almo, Rodrigo, Pawan

NEXT STEPS

Session	Action Items	Who?
Deep Dive Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merge big bets and Investment funds Cities. • Embed climate action into work plans • Flagship report with lessons learnt. Branding and people-centered stories. 	Pablo, Mariana, John-Rob, Henrique, Sudeshna, Daniel, Roxana, Max, Roxana, Bety, Beth, Prakash, Daniel, Rodrigo, Paula
RPT Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rethinking the design and goals of the project • Design use case narratives based on local & funding context to best serve project goals • Convene a working group to update the RPT strategy and work plans. 	Felipe, Cristina, Claudia, Ben, Paula, Daniel, Rodrigo, Pawan
Integrated Climate Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage CHAMP as an overarching driver to support other programmatic / project goals • Explore how cities can use CHAMP to encourage National governments to collaborate on climate action • Research – Combined knowledge product (Campinas/Mumbai) 	Michael, Max, Jaya, Henrique, Toni