

# Adaptive Management

A SERIES OF WORKSHOPS FOR PARTNERS ON THE SOUTH ASIA  
GOVERNANCE PROGRAM

DR NICOLA NIXON, GOVERNANCE DIRECTOR (AND COLLEAGUES)

AUGUST – SEPTEMBER 2021



**The Asia Foundation**

Improving Lives, Expanding Opportunities

# Mentimeter Quiz

What was your key takeaway from last session?



# LEARNING JOURNEY

Week of  
5th August



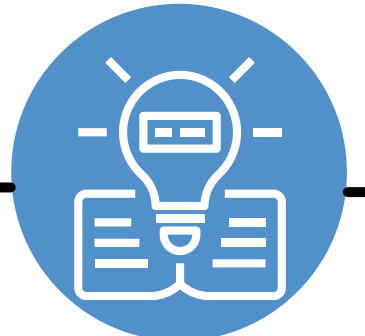
Definition, Origins  
and Rationale

Week of  
12th August



Teams and  
Partnerships

Week of  
19th August



Theory of  
change

Week of  
26th August



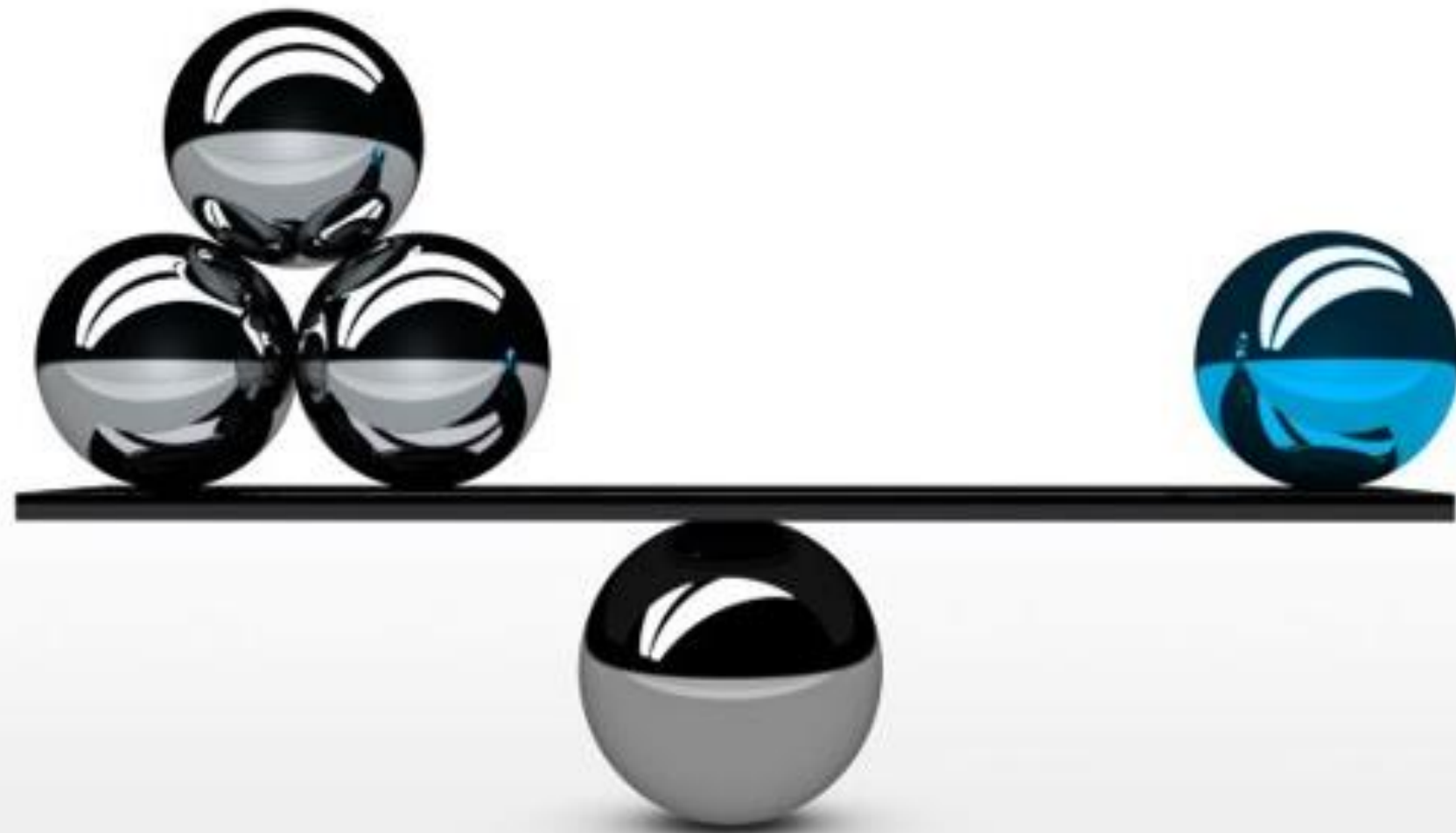
Monitoring and  
Learning

Week of 2nd  
September



Adaptive  
Operations

# BALANCING FLEXIBILITY WITH ACCOUNTABILITY



# WHAT'S MISSING IN ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION?

Program Goal (Sector development)

Outcome 1  
(Organizational  
Development)

Outcome 2  
(Networks)

Outcome 3  
(Mentoring  
Program)



# MAKING WORKPLANS ADAPTIVE

Assume a VUCA World  
(Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous)

Fixed activities	Flexible activities	Adaptive workstream (Sandpit)
Training program to be designed and delivered	Policy dialogue (if context is conducive)	Entirely flexible (to 9 months)

Accountability: Sound risk management

# BUDGETING THE WORKPLAN

## Flexibility:

- ❑ DFAT-TAF Joint Steering Committee approves the overall budget
- ❑ Presented as cost per component, including management costs
- ❑ TAF can realign budgets between components
- ❑ Amid COVID19 restrictions with no face-to-face activities
  - Incurred savings from budget for travel, food, accommodation
  - Needed a constant Plan B

## Accountability:

- ❑ Annual internal and external audits required
- ❑ Robust financial record keeping
- ❑ Strong financial systems



### Tips:

- 1) Keep an eye on cost categories
- 2) Prioritize fixed commitments
- 3) Adjust variable items
- 4) Review quarterly

# Adaptive Procurement

## Coalitions for Change

### Flexibility

- ❑ CfC engages local entities via individual consultants or fixed-cost grants to organizations
- ❑ Flexible number of person-day (LOEs)
- ❑ Adaptive contract management - Consultants and grant partners are part of the reform team.

### Accountability

- ❑ By default – go into open tender
- ❑ Carve a space for “special exemptions”
- ❑ Important to put in a good justification
- ❑ Good record keeping





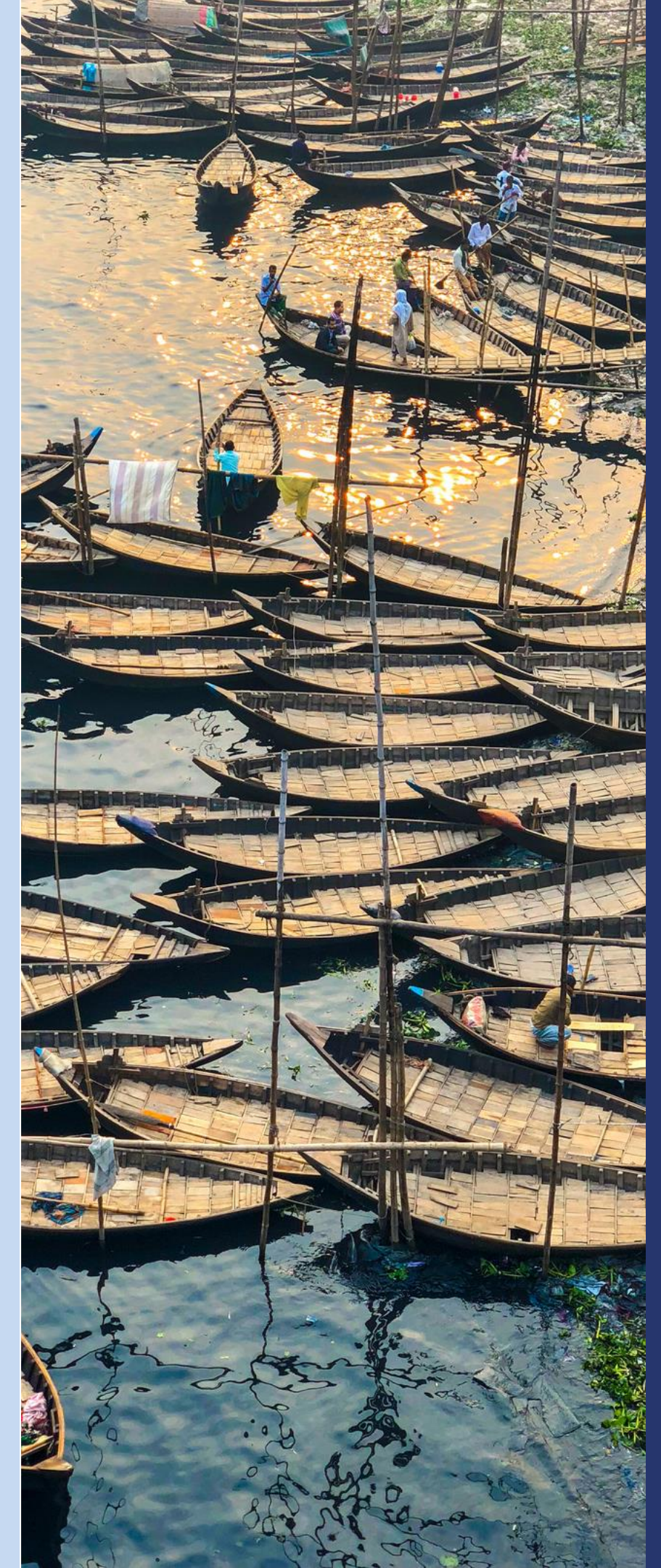
# Making contracts (more) adaptive





# ADDITIONAL TIPS

- ❑ **Operations must maintain integrity**
- ❑ **But must also keep up with fast moving reforms – start with a broad plan but be careful not be wedded to it**
  
- ❑ **Put in enough structure in operations to absorb any eventualities**
  - **Understand policies**
  - **Determine the non-negotiables**
  - **Assess the extent to which you can be flexible**
  - **Plan Ahead. Anticipate common resources/services and procure them in advance**
  
- ❑ **Keep the structure as flat as you can**
  - **Sign off on procurement for low value procurement**
  - **But operation team has eyes and ears on everything**



# RECRUITING FOR CREATIVITY



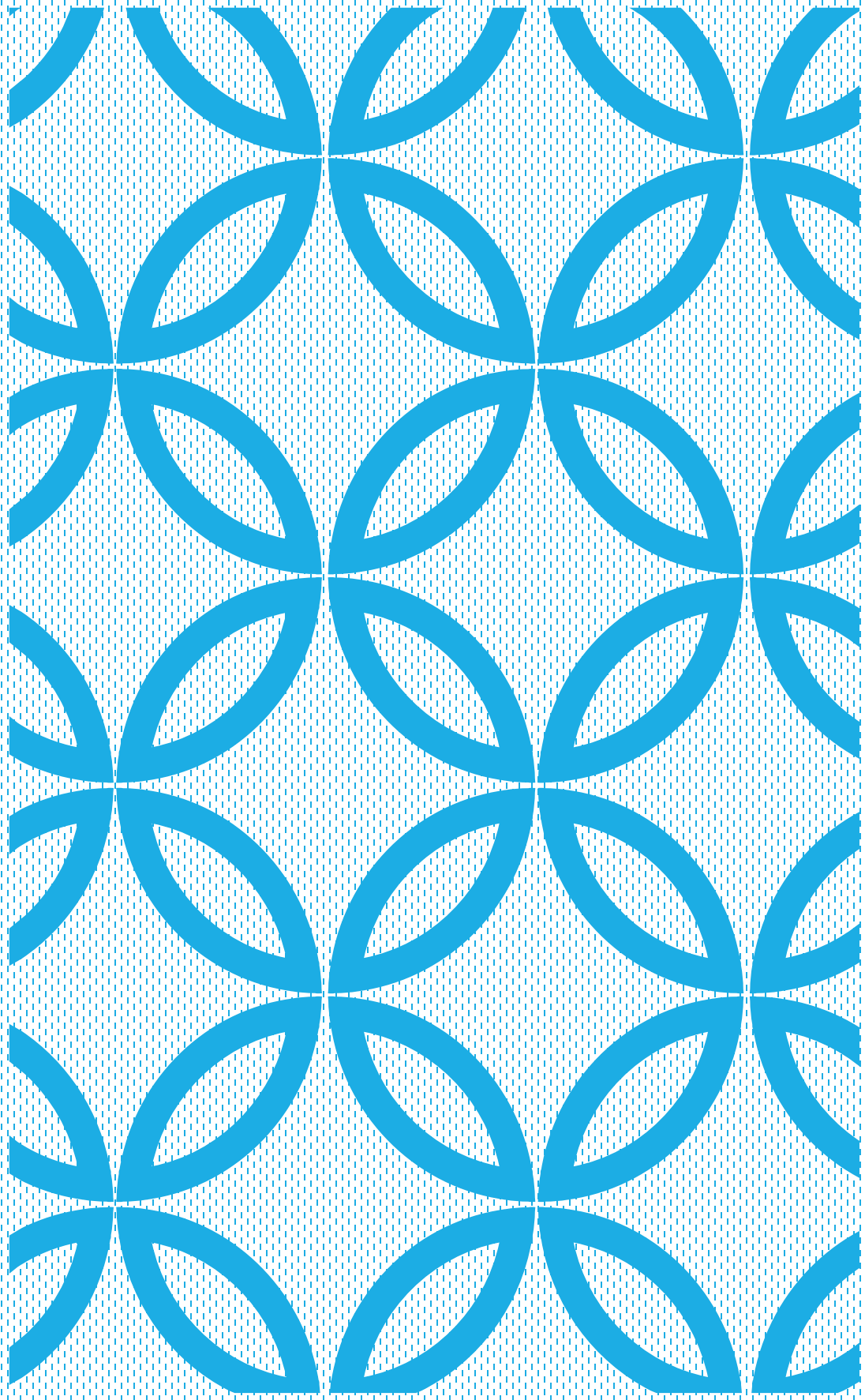


## **SOFT (REAL) SKILLS FOR ADAPTATION**

- Value people**
- Ability to develop deep relationships**
- Strong judgement**
- Ability to learn from failure**
- Bring operations people into program activities**

# DISCUSSION





# Quiz Time

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How much did you learn? Let's find out!

# Question 1

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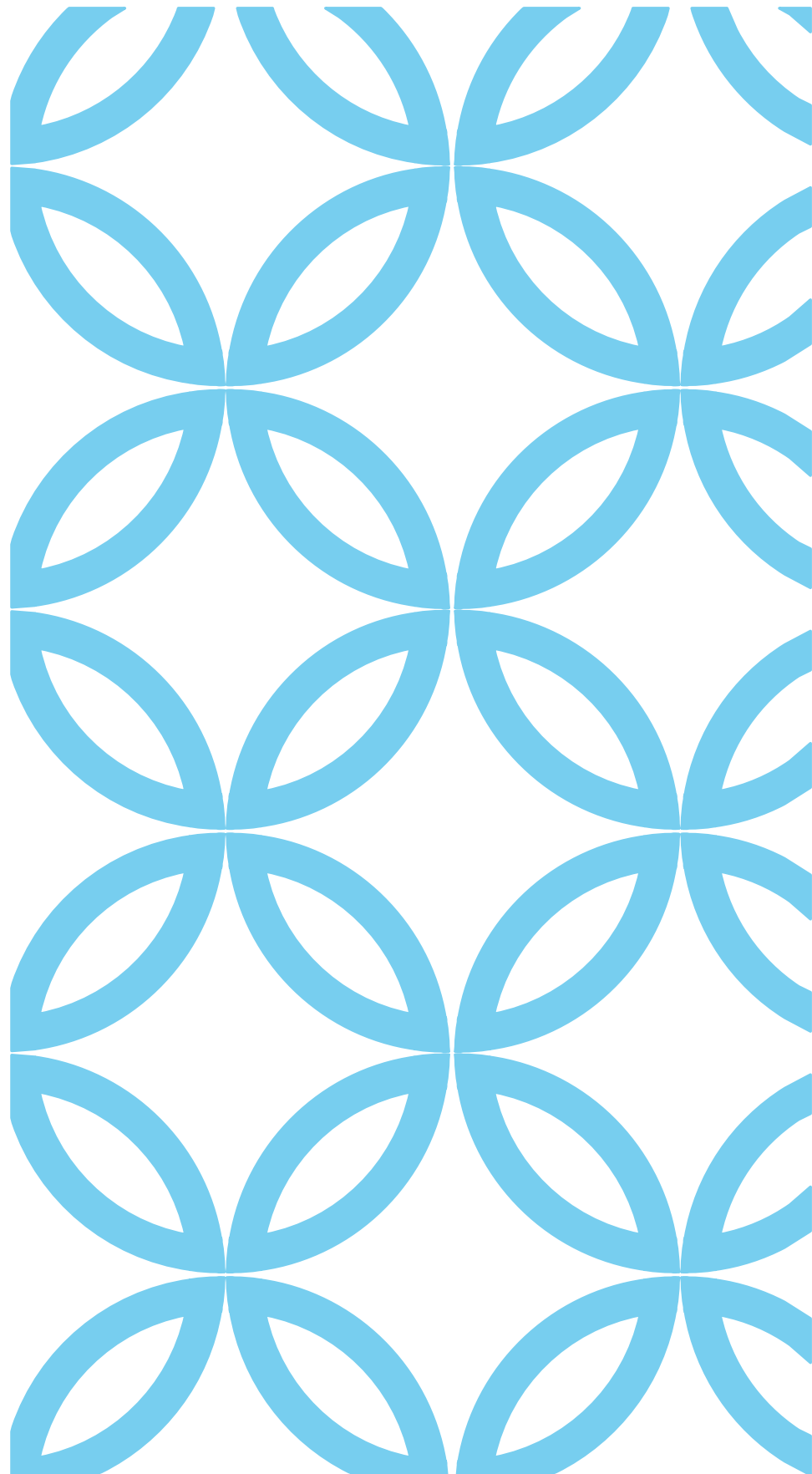
## Fill in the blanks

Three key criteria for Adaptive Management are

- 1) Proactive not only reactive
- 2) a realistic and well-socialized Theory of change
- 3) Evidence-based

1 Point for 1 correct answer

/2 points



## Question 2

**What is essential to adaptive teams and partnerships that enables adaptation to occur?**

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**Trust**

1 Point for 1 correct answer

/1 point



## Question 3

Name a practice that can be used to build the enabling environment for better external relationship for adaptive program.

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**Partnership brokering**

1 Point for 1 correct answer  
/1 point

## Question 4

Fill in the blanks

- 1) A theory of change is an explanation of how we expect change will happen. It starts with a problem we seek to overcome.
- 2) Assumptions are particularly important in a theory of change. They help identify the risks from the beginning so that they can be accounted for and managed during implementation.

1 Point for 1 correct answer

/2 points

# Question 5

TRUE or FALSE

1) A TOC helps us identify our short-term goals, the indicators we want to use, and should be focused on reporting to donors.

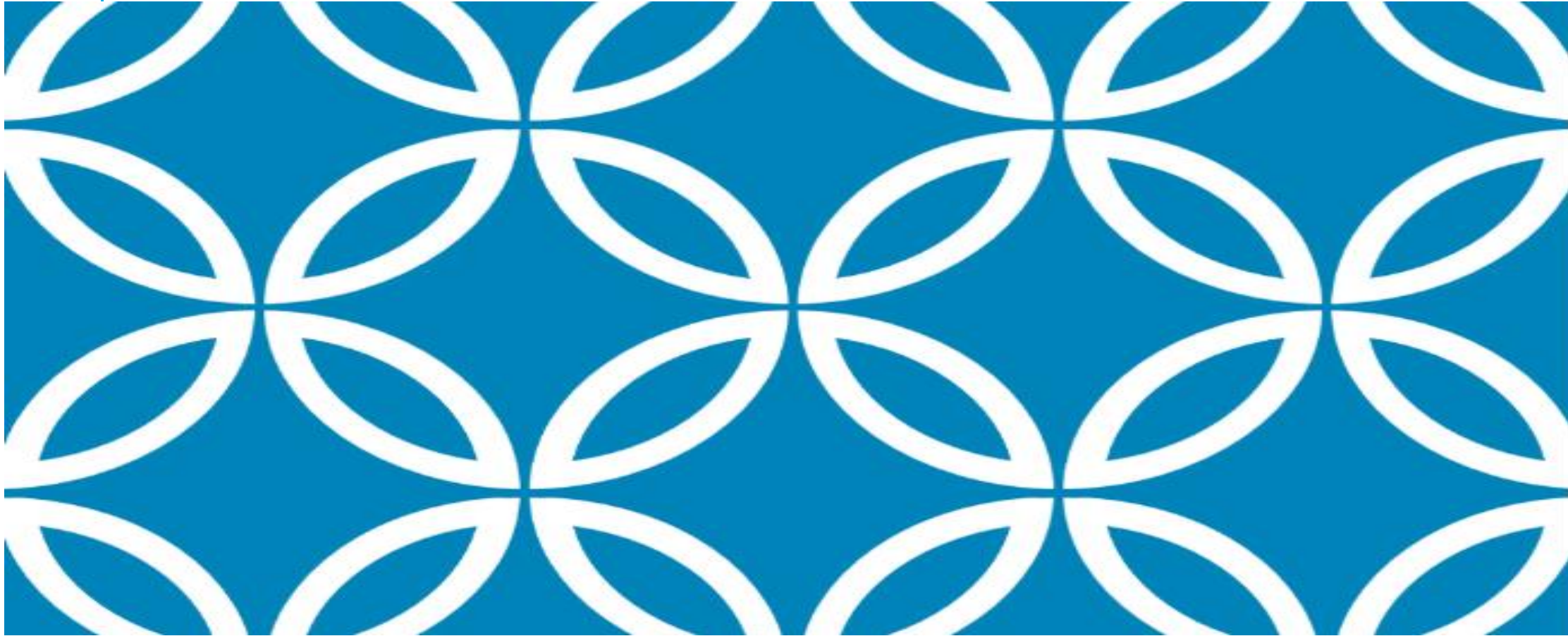
**(false)**

2) A TOC forms the basis for Adaptive Management because we revisit and reconsider it regularly to see whether our initial Theory is correct or needs to be changed. **(True)**

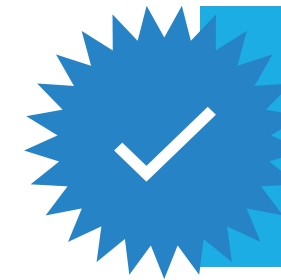
1 Point for 1 correct answer

/2 points

# Question 6



List three things to consider when setting up feedback loops (strategy testing)?



**When: Carving out time**



**Who: Participants**



**How: Process**

1 Point for 1 correct answer

/3 points



## Question 7

Who has a key role in reflection session of strategy testing and what they do?

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A critical friend who has enough knowledge of the program to challenge the team on their strategies and their assumptions

1 Point for 1 correct answer  
/2 points

## TYPES OF DOCUMENTATION

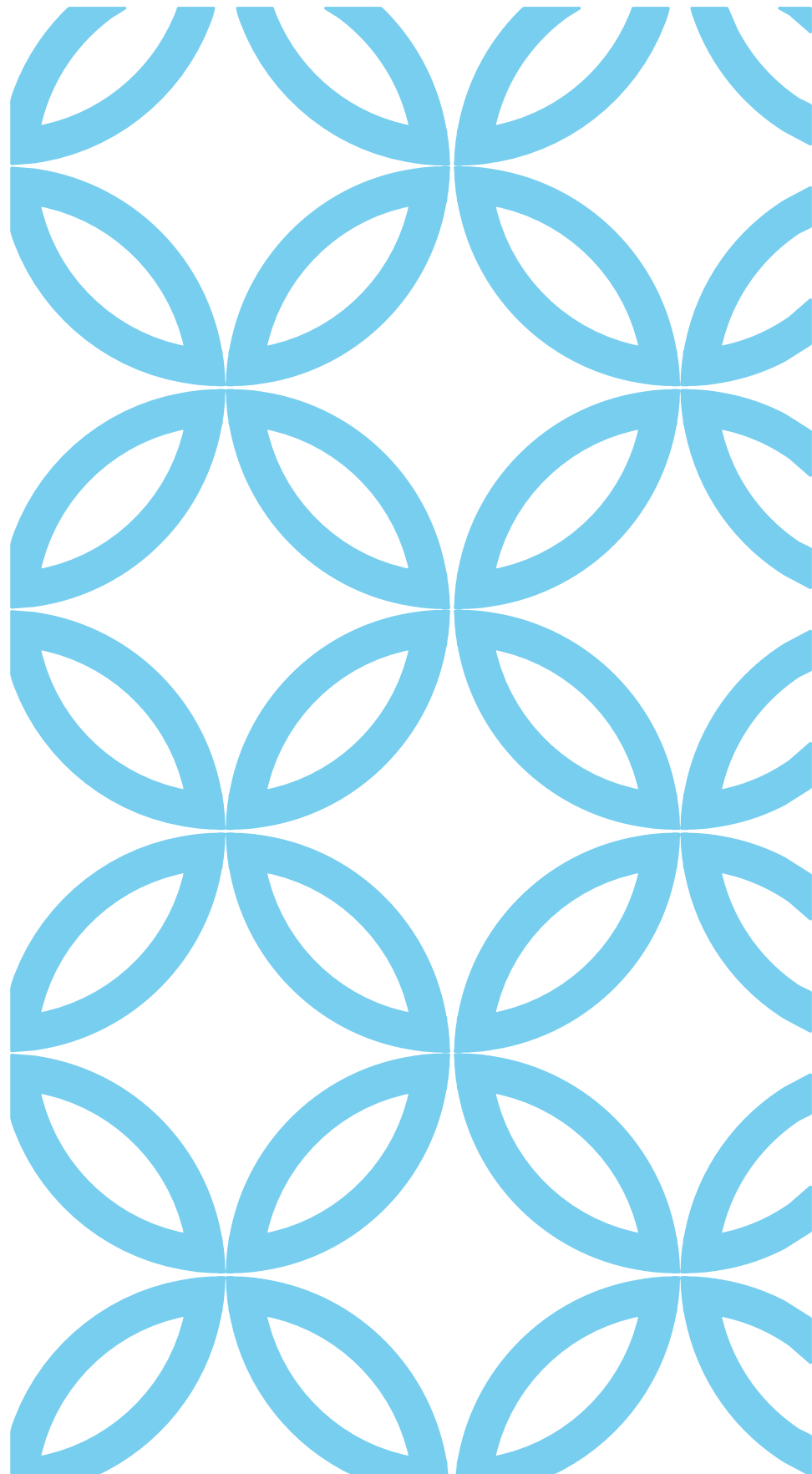
- MERL Plan – living document
- Timeline Tool
- Pivot Log
- Scenario Planning
- Notes, reports, case studies, evaluations, surveys

PIVOT LOG - ACTIVITY NAME Document changes to the activity scope. Including but not limited to tasks, timelines, and deliverables.			
Date	What changed?	Reason for the change	Comments

Write down two types of documentations does your organization use to collect evidence.

### Question 8

1 Point for 1 correct answer  
/2 points



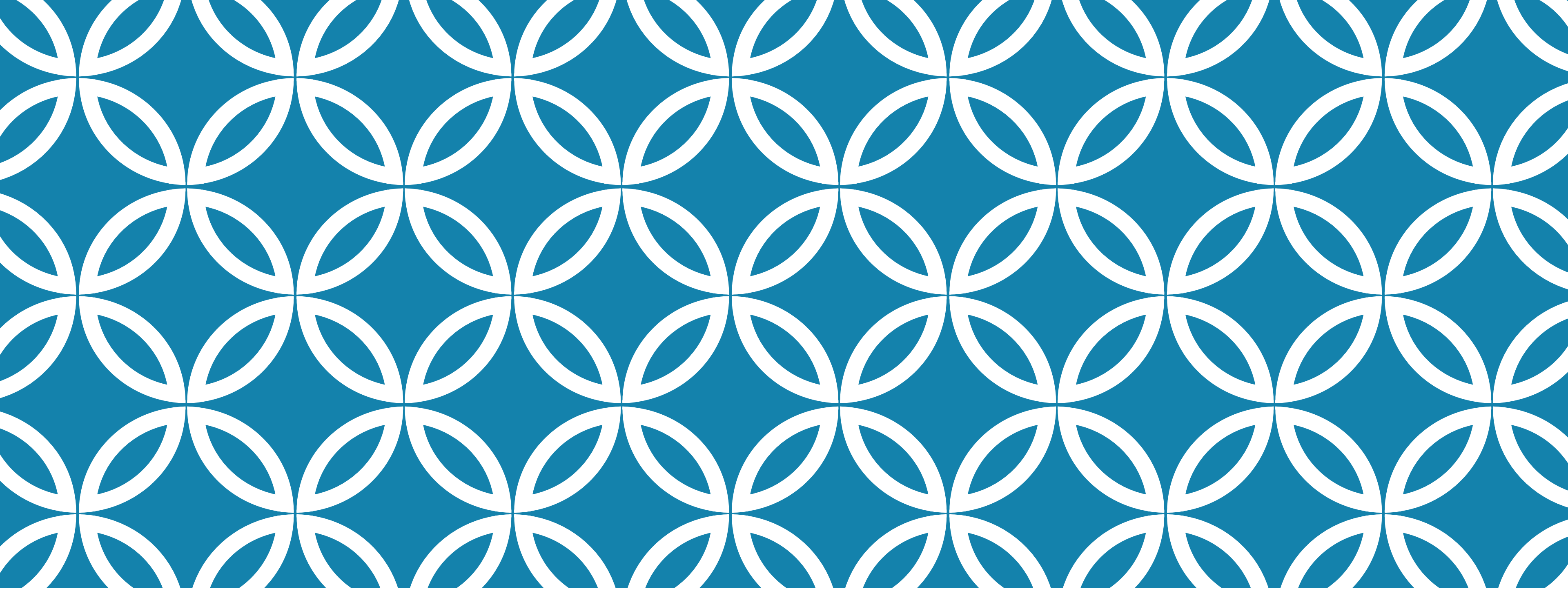
## Question 9

What is the central challenge in Adaptive Management?

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**Balancing flexibility with accountability**

1 Point for 1 correct answer  
/1 point



**THANK YOU**

**Add up your total  
points out of /16**



# CONCLUSIONS



## Completion Survey

Tell us what you thought