

Between the Reporting Lines: the Craft of Successful Town-Gown-Crown Partnership in Sustainability Research



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Outline

1. Context

2. What success has looked like:

- **Alignment of purpose**
- **Trust**
- **Knowledge translated**

3. Innovation for sustainability in the Okanagan context: past lessons for new opportunities.



1. Context

- **State-subsidized town-gown-crown collaborations aka 'triple helix'**
- **Facing problems *requiring* inter- or trans-disciplinary research**
- **Transformative end-goals**
- **End-user 'pull' innovation aiming at making a practical, often profitable difference**



2. What success has looked like:

- **Multi-factor: publication, planet, profit**
- **Above all, no stranded investment**
- **All other typical expectations of partnerships... but...**

Sustainability R&D is different: contested goals, sought by methods still under development.



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2.1 Alignment of purpose:

- **Knowing you need the other**
- **Having specific *and* general goals**
- **Aiming at integrated outcomes – each succeeds only when all succeed**
- **Constructive patience when faced with the strange**



2.2 Trust:

- **Building from it, not to it**
- **Context of implementation of formal agreements, or (temporary) substitute for them**
- **At the right organizational levels**



2.3 Knowledge translated:

- **Intellectual property protection when relevant**
- **A nuanced approach to disclosure: a 'what size fits us?' approach, not one-size-fits all**
- **Shared scepticism of 'managed innovation,' acceptance of improvisation as a method and tool**
- **Progress as welcome as product**



What this research and experience makes me want to mull over...

- **Limitations of a 'scientific competition as usual' approach for urgent sustainability research.**
 - Structured competition?
- **Limitations of sole commercializer partner model**
 - From 'private innovation pipeline' to knowledge markets?



3. Okanagan Sustainability.

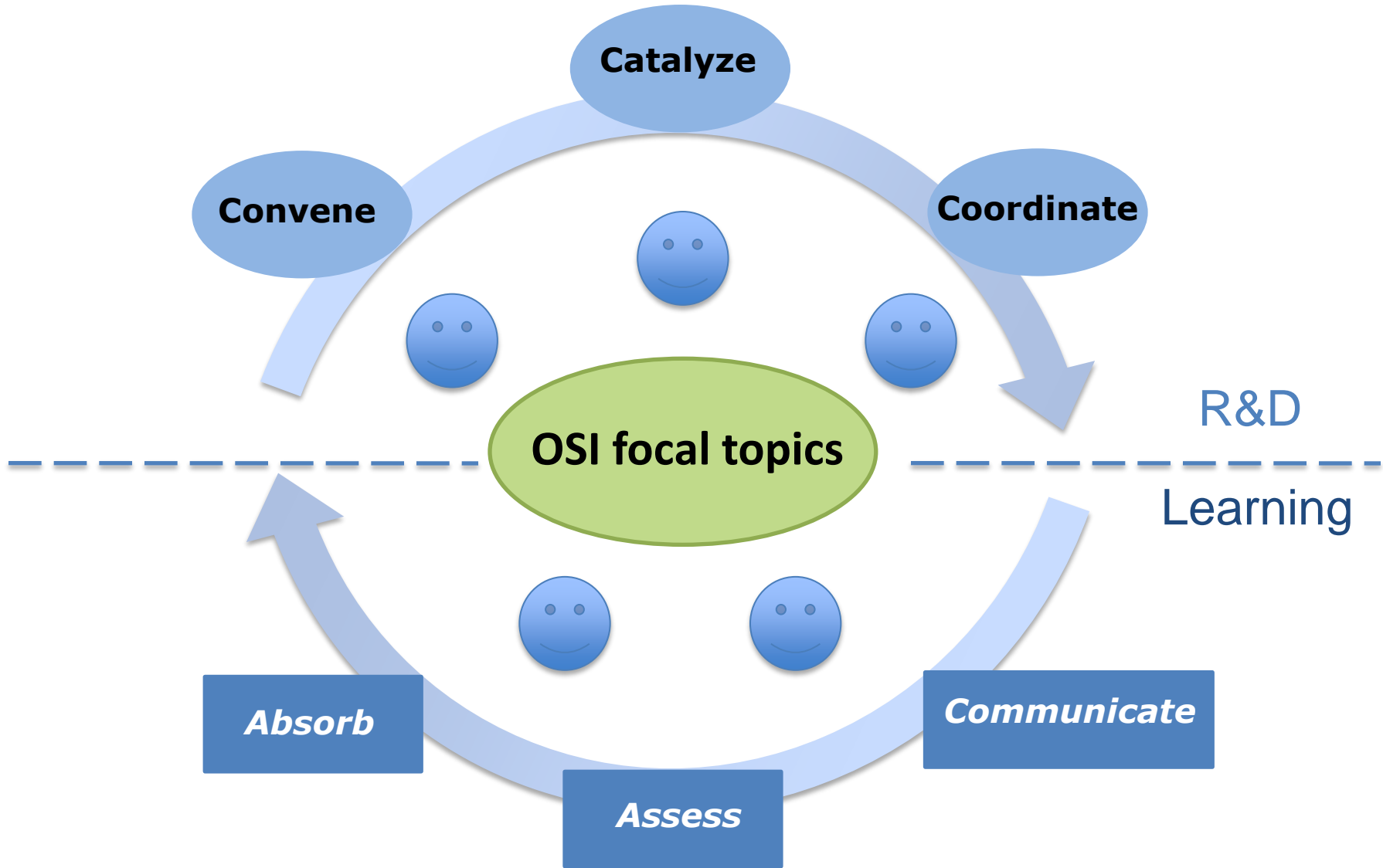
An *initial* focal topic: Water – Urbanization - Rurality

- **Use *Okanagan valley as living lab***
- **Build on existing inter-faculty strengths**
- **Draw on highly engaged partners**
- **Complement and extend Vancouver campus focus on living lab and university as *agent of change***
 - **Microcosm of food-energy-water-urbanization problem nexus**
 - **Results have regional, national, and international relevance**



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R&D



Learning

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

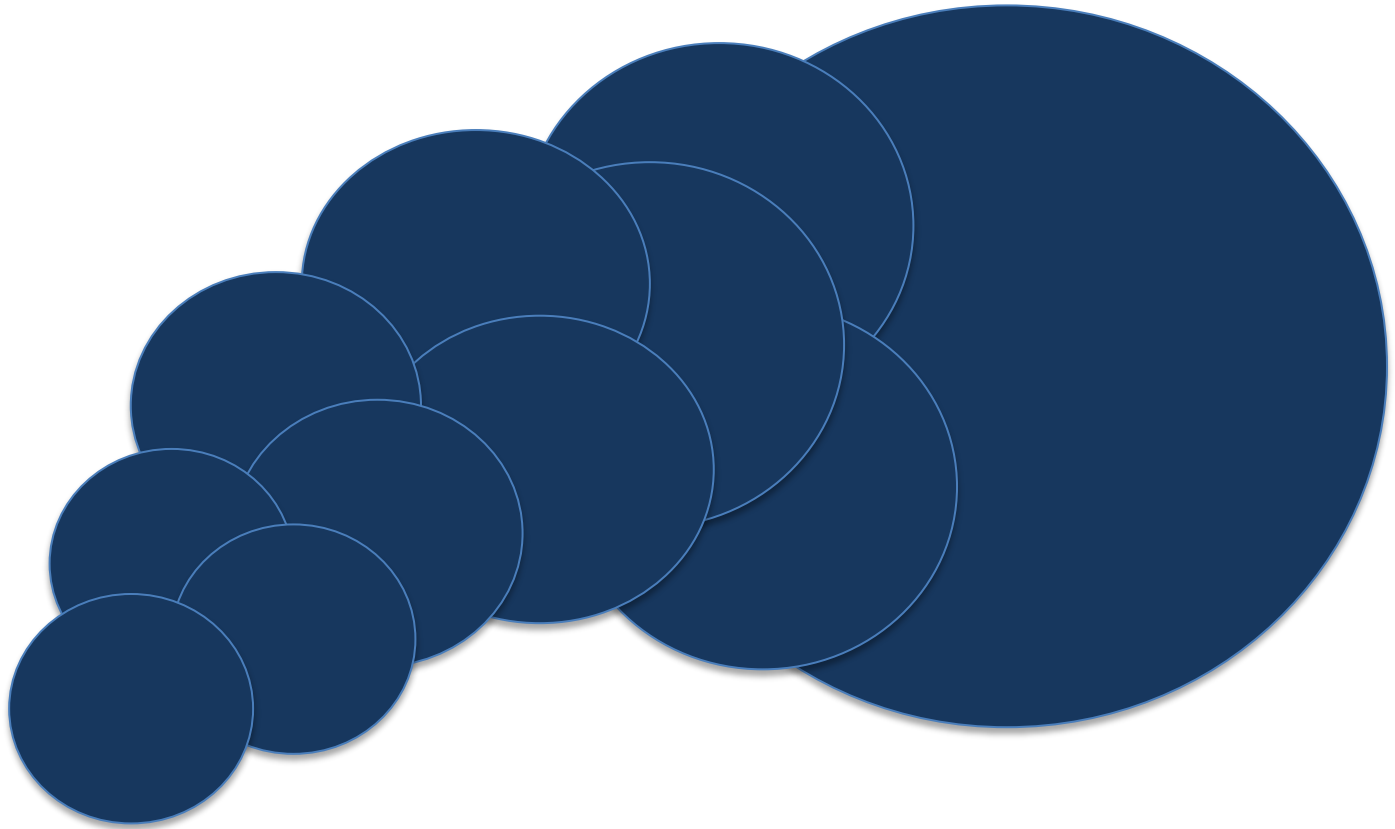
Year 4



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Building large-scale integration from collaborative building blocks



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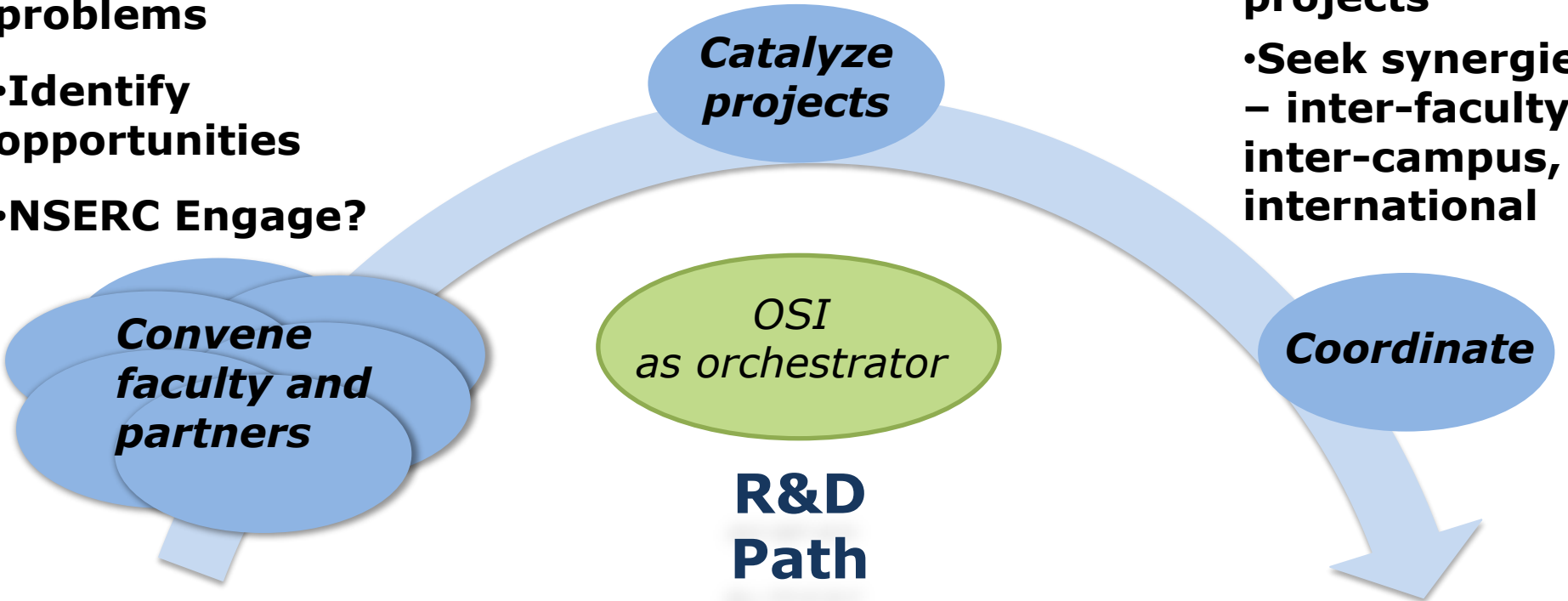
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- Share knowledge
- Co-define problems
- Identify opportunities
- NSERC Engage?

- Triage problems
- Match capacity, competence partners
- Invest in project management, proposal review, seed funds
- Secure external support

- Conduct projects
- Seek synergies – inter-faculty, inter-campus, international



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Learning Path

OSI as orchestrator

Absorb

Communicate

Assess

- **Communicate best practices within partners**

- **Communicate best practices to new or potential partners**

- **Proposal preparation**
- **Partnership practices**
- **Project management**

- **Demonstration and pilot projects**

- **Knowledge transfer and translation (valorisation)**

- ***Peer-reviewed publications***



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