

# Strategic thinking model for sustainability (ST4S) - Critical Decision Factors approach

Maria Rosário Partidário

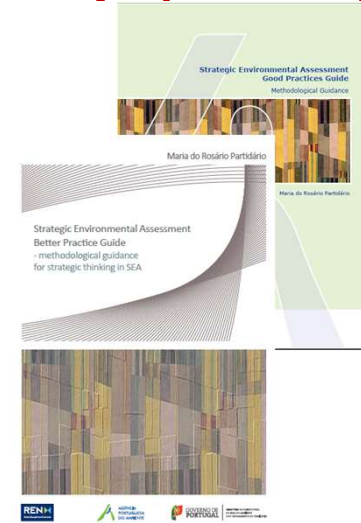
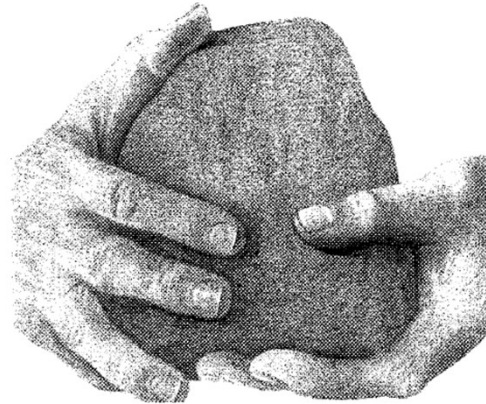
Professor

Universidade de Lisboa / Aalborg University

[mariapartidario@tecnico.ulisboa.pt](mailto:mariapartidario@tecnico.ulisboa.pt)

# Framework for Strategic Thinking for Sustainability (ST4S)

(Partidário 2007, 2012)



To help create contexts for sustainable development

Through SEA or through other strategic approaches to sustainability

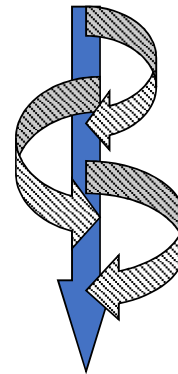
# ST4S model in SEA/SA

Always combine three components

Communication and  
Engagement - governance

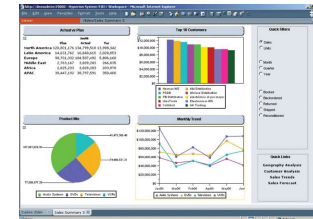


Process



SEA – framework of  
structural elements

Technical  
analysis



Three functions : Integration (60%), Assessment (25-30%), Validation (15-10%)



## ST4S model in SEA/SA

### Three distinguishing features

1. **Critical decision factors** – the pinpoints in the assessment framework
2. **Pathways for sustainability** – options assessment (risks and opportunities)
3. **Continuing dialogues** between processes and people (actors networks), throughout decision cycles

Partidário, 2007, 2012 Guide for Better Practice SEA

# ST4S model in SEA/SA

## Creating sustainable development contexts

The essence of the strategic thinking methodology for SEA

### FOCUS

Priorities in a broad integrated sustainability context

Critical Decision Factors

### ASSESS PATHWAYS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

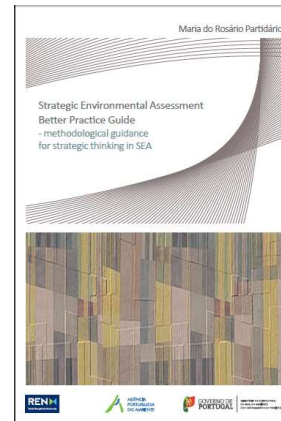
What may be risks and opportunities of strategic options

Issue guidelines and recommendations

Continuous dialogues: process links, engagement, follow-up

Cyclical re-assessment as the context change and learning takes place with development unfolding

(Partidário, 2007, 2012)



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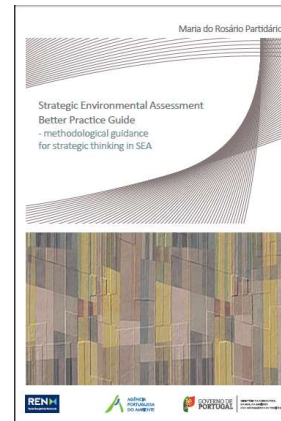
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# Strategic-thinking model for sustainability in SEA/SA (ST4S)

## Strategic issues (Partidário 2012)

Policy choices that address critical challenges to achieve a vision – requires **positioning in the future, rather than simply reacting to problems**

Criteria to define strategic issues:

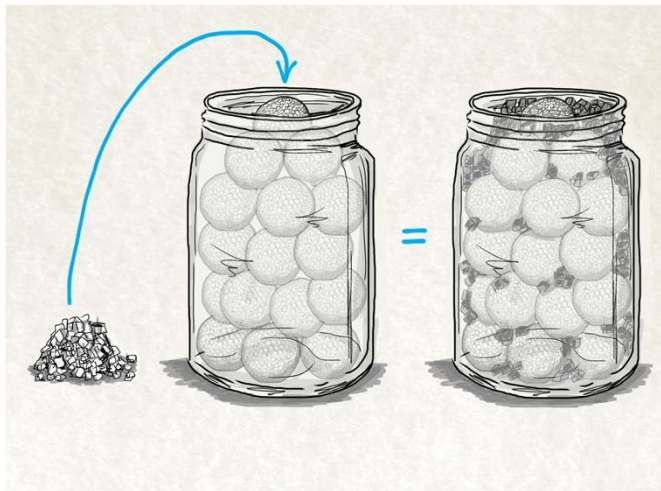
- Relates to long-term objectives
- Is a priority issue
- Covers broad range of issues





# Strategic-thinking model for sustainability in SEA/SA (ST4S)

“Strategic” implies that some decisions and actions are considered more important than others



Prioritize

Focus: Put important things first

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWaksMPvJ4c>

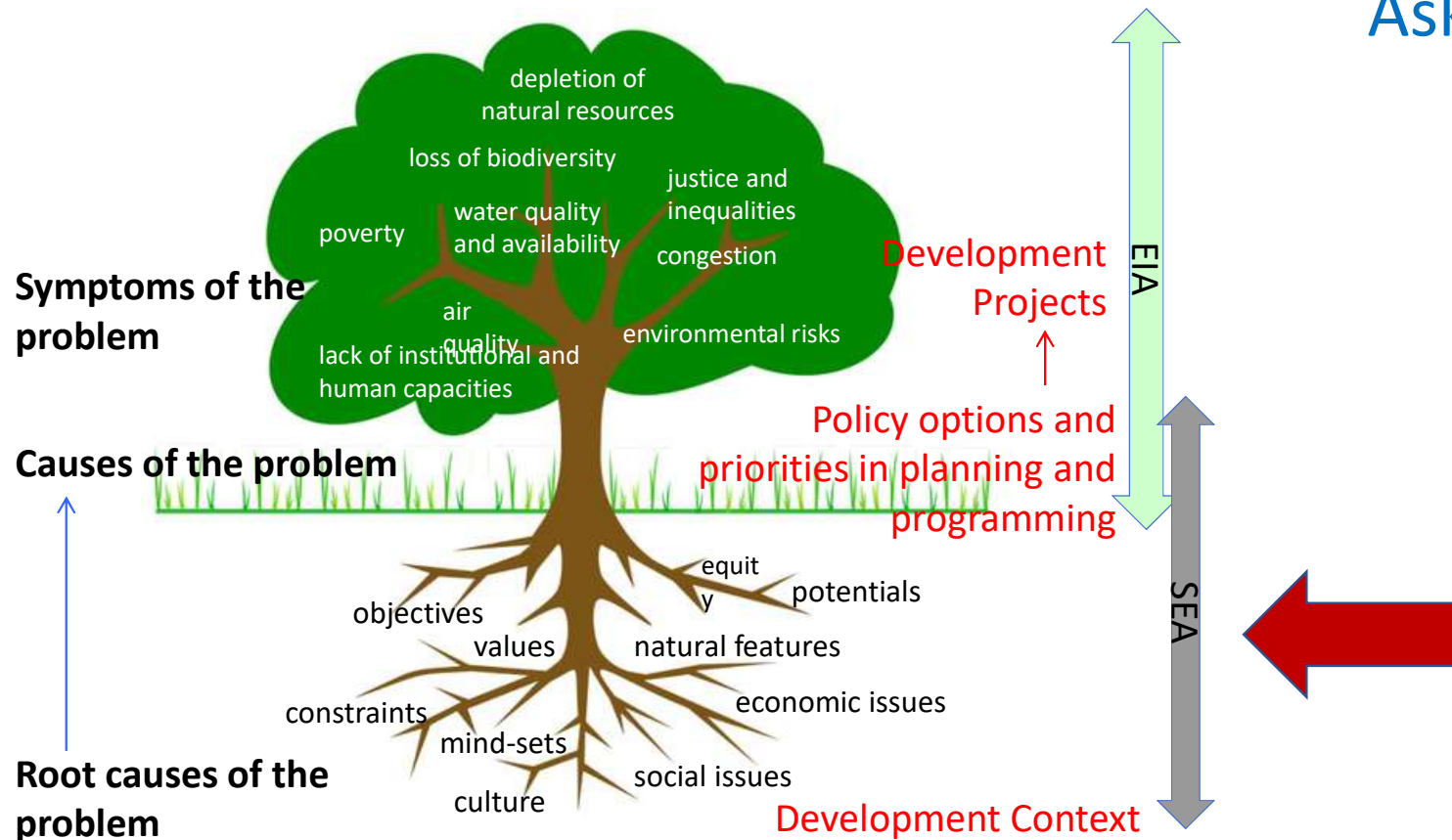




# Understand the problem - Focus on root causes

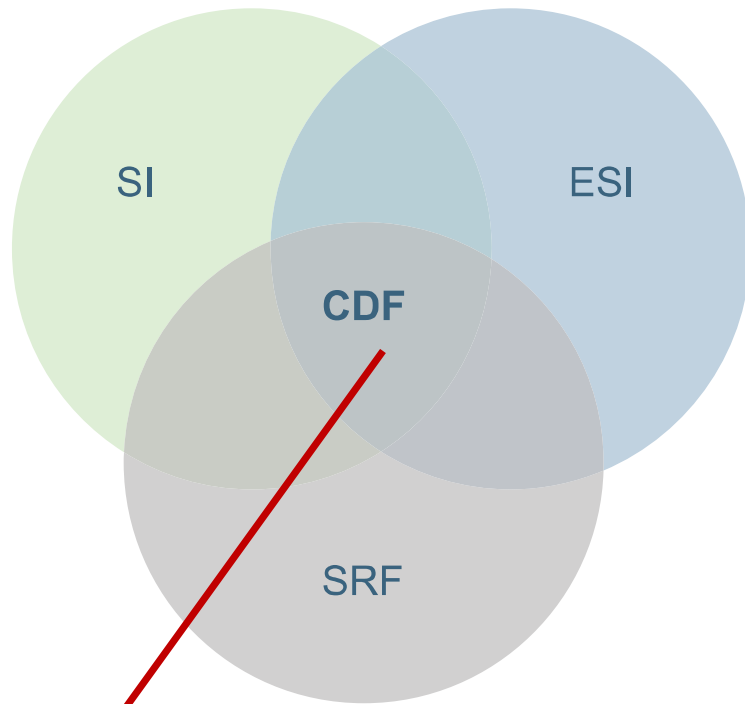
## Problem tree

Ask WHY



Partidário, 2012)

# Mapping Critical Decision Factors



**(3 < CDF < 7)**

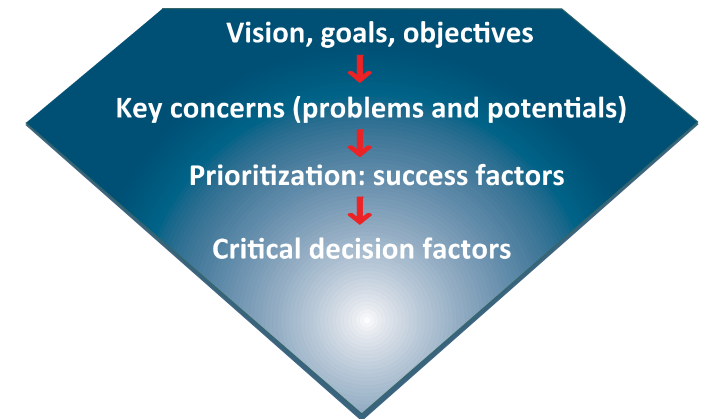
SI – strategic development issues

ESI – environmental and sustainability issues

SRF – Strategic Reference Framework (macro-policies)

CDF – assessment criteria - indicators

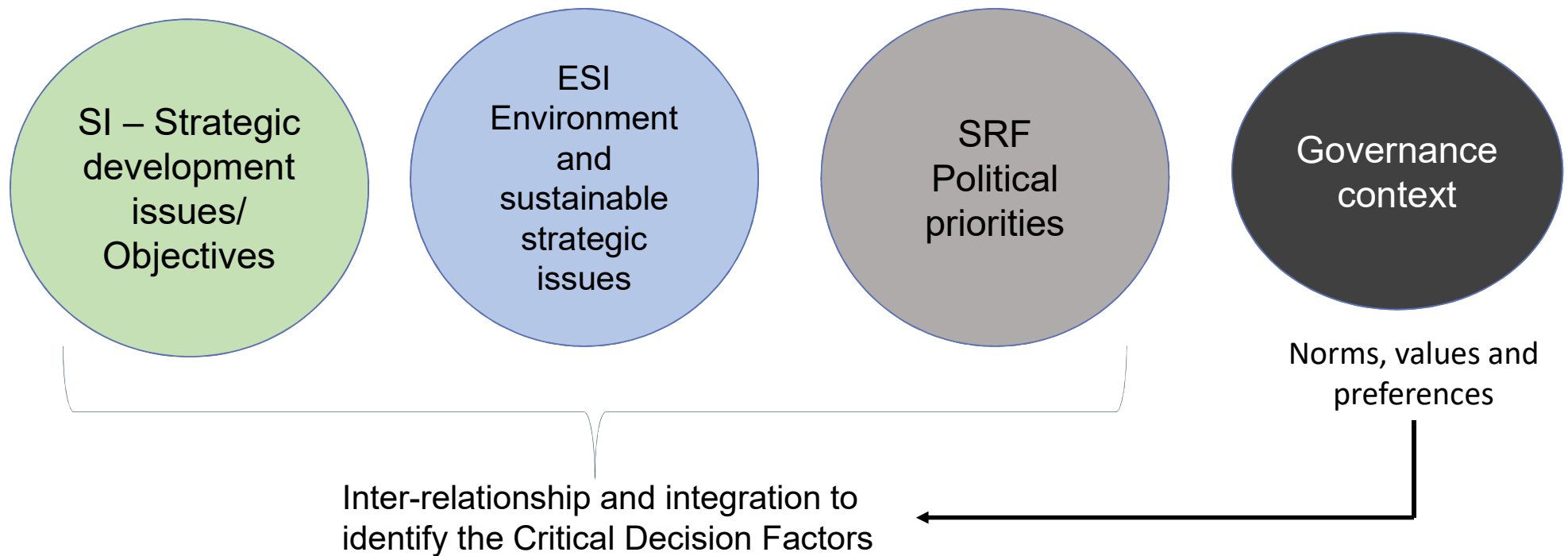
## The Diamond



**Get focused and identify  
Critical Decision Factors (CDF)**

*CDF are integrated/holistic factors that represent priorities for strategic decisions to ensure sustainable outcomes in the long-term*

# Understand the context for SEA



# Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

As a strategic assessment framework for achieving sustainable development

Strategic Reference Framework – macro-policies that set the reference for strategic assessment



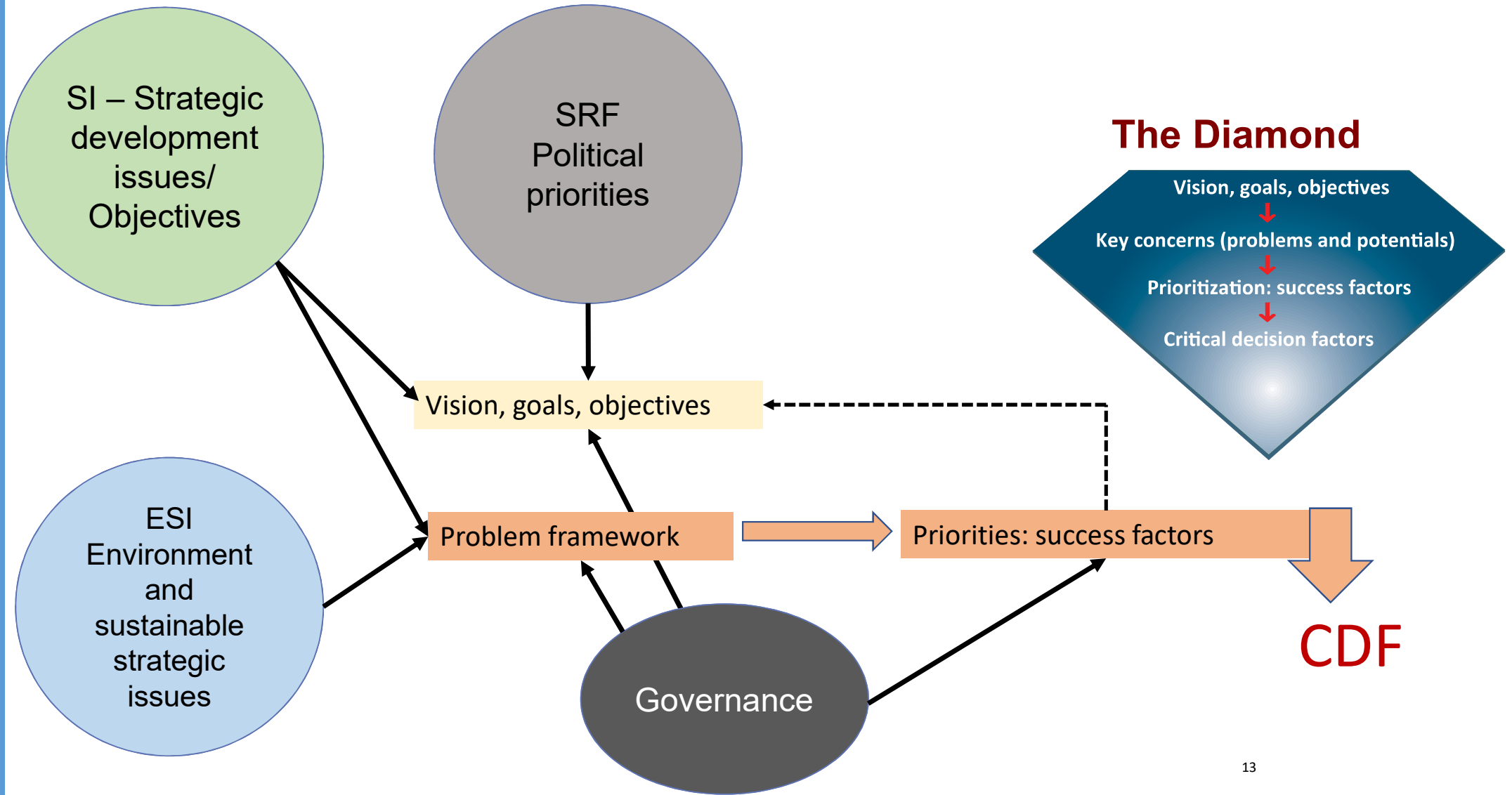
## Questions

- Which SDG / targets are relevant for this strategic assessment?
- How can strategy S contribute to achieving SDG X, Y and Z?

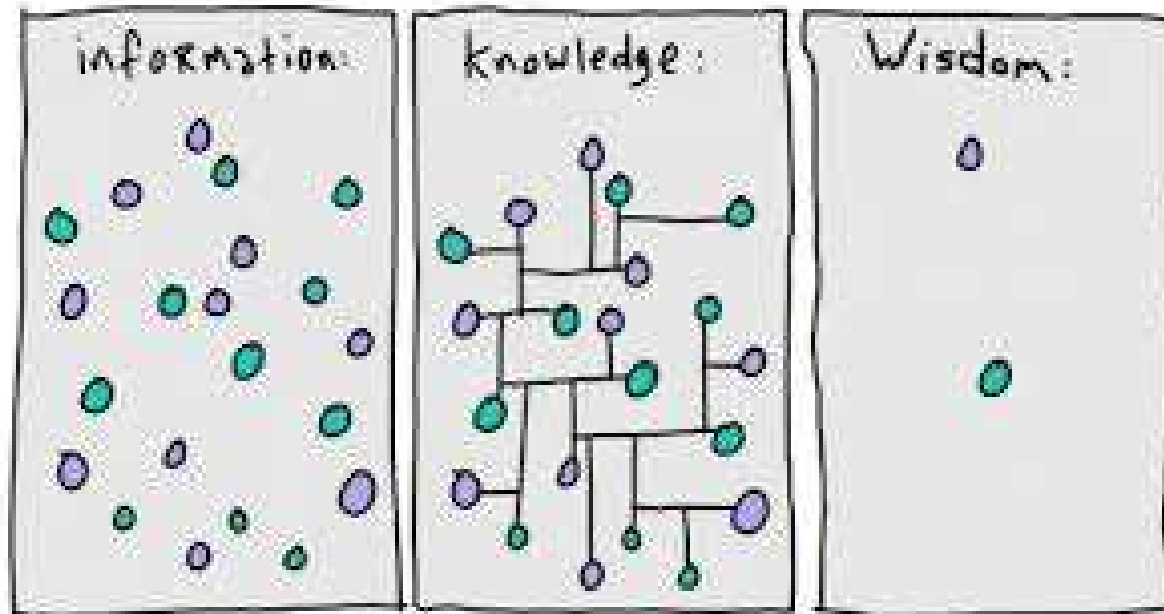


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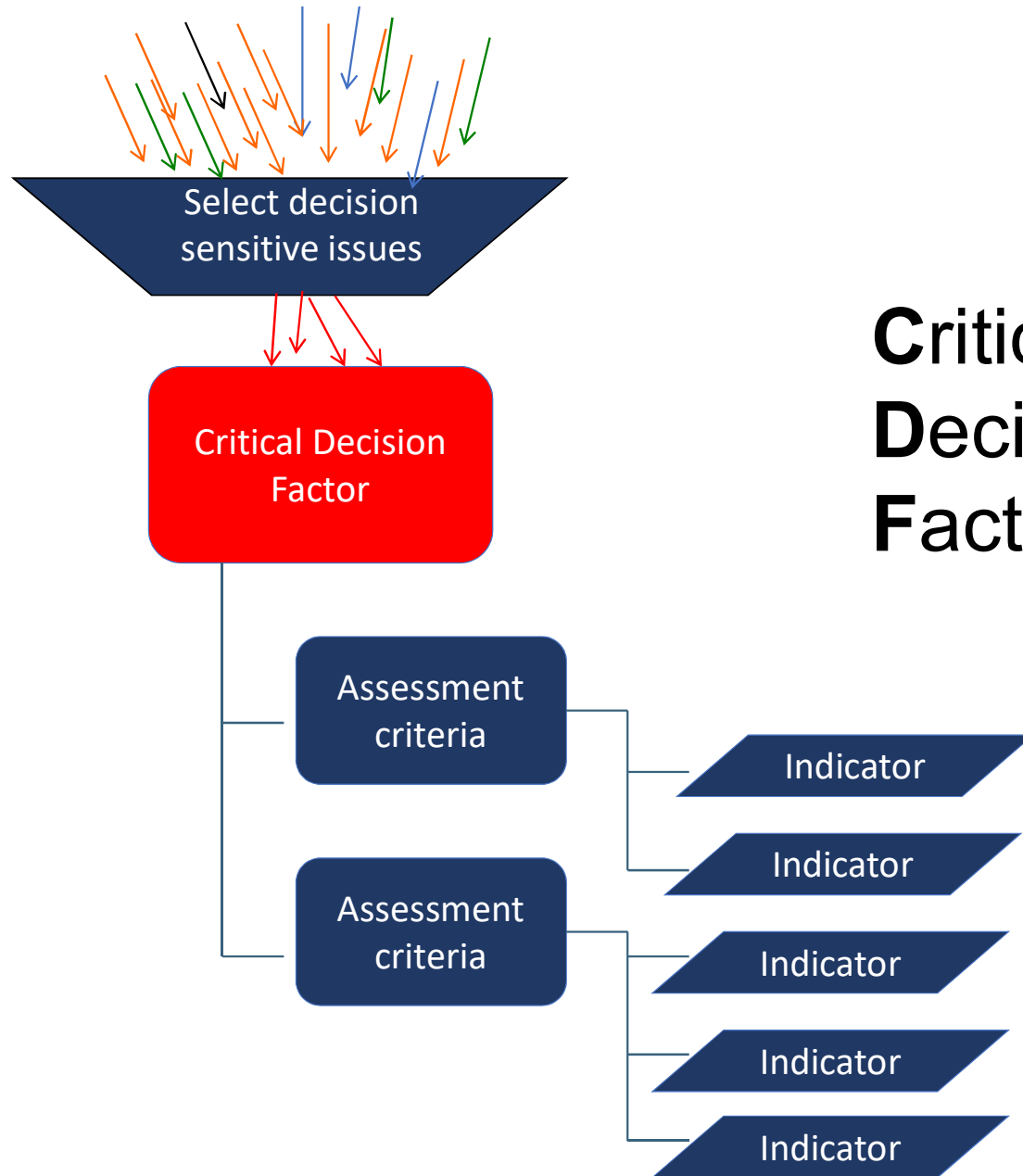
# Get focused



The Critical Decision Factors represent the wisdom

## From data to wisdom

Russel Ackhoff wisdom theory, 1989



# Critical Decision Factors



# Mapping CDF and generating the assessment framework

## Problem framework (ESI+SI)

Conflicts	Sensitivities	Potentials	Drivers of change

## Strategic reference framework

Macro-policies	Objectives	Targets

## Governance framework

	Stakeholders (relational matrix)	
Roles and responsibilities	links	links

## Assessment framework

Critical Decision Factors	Assessment criteria	Indicators

(Partidário, 2007, 2012)

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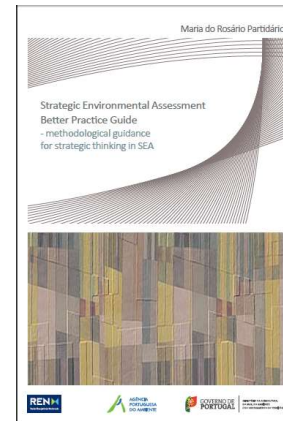
Critical Decision Factors

**ASSESS PATHWAYS FOR SUSTAINABILITY**  
What may be risks and opportunities of strategic options  
Issue guidelines and recommendations

**Continuous dialogues: process links, engagement, follow-up**

Cyclical re-assessment as the context change and learning takes place with development unfolding

(Partidário, 2007, 2012)



# **ASSESSMENT**

Use Trend analysis

Identify strategic options

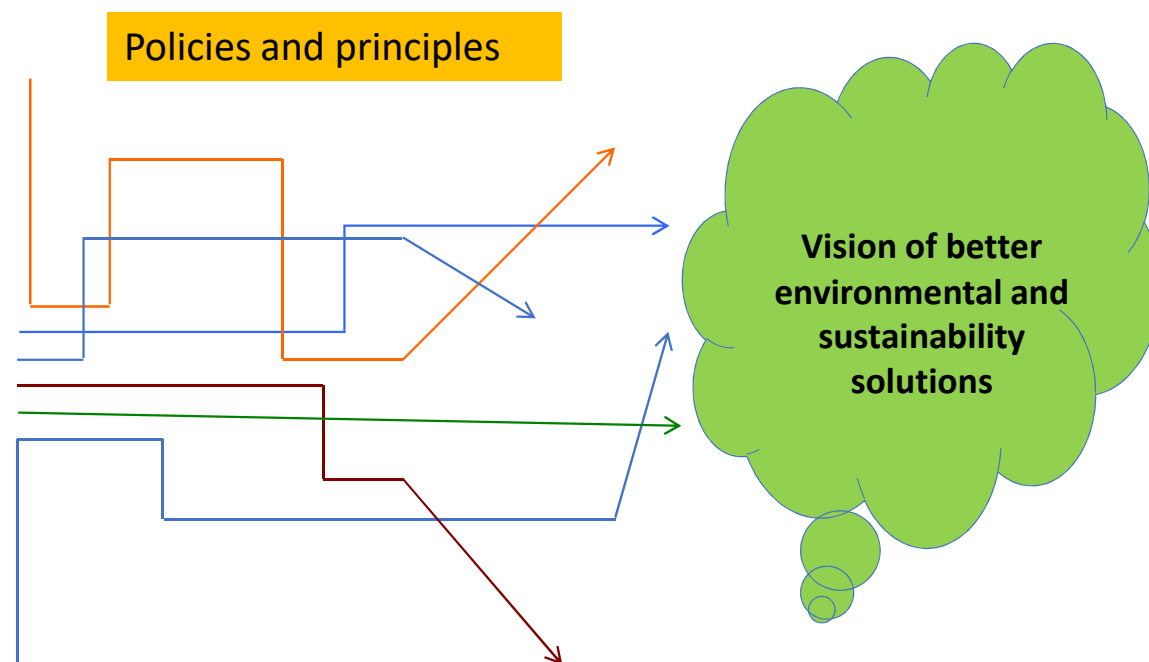
What may be risks and opportunities of strategic options

Provide guidelines as orientations (governance, management, monitoring)

# Strategic options

smart stepping stones  
towards the full scope of  
sustainability (defined by  
sustainability principles,

and not as **choices between  
evils in the short term**  
(Broman and Robèrt, FSSD,  
2017)



Optional pathways to enable strategic  
objectives, towards sustainability

(Partidário, 2007, 2012)

# Assess Opportunities and Risks

Use CDF to assess conditions for development  
Indicate the direction of a trend for a specific pathway.

Assess benefits to the natural, social and cultural values (opportunities) and possible damaging outcomes (risks) and what this means in relation to sustainable development processes



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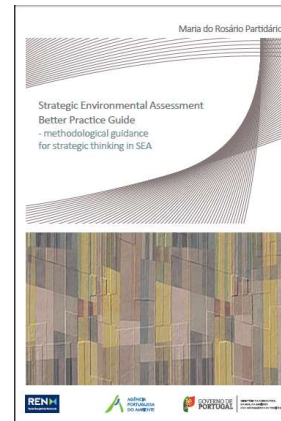
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# Processes links means

Link terminology / concepts between PPP and SEA  
Knowledge sharing and Information  
Identifying decision points (decision windows)  
Stakeholders engagement for both PPP and SEA  
Communication strategy for both  
Reporting (aligned)  
Timeline (aligned)





# Engagement for creativity and governance

## Techniques

Institutional analysis – look for intersectoral links and coordination.

Stakeholder analysis tools (power vs interest)

Stakeholders' perceptions

Public engagement practices

Participatory assessments to prioritize issues

(Partidário, 2007, 2012)

# Follow-up: monitoring and evaluation

## Techniques

Set mechanisms (institutional and technical) for continuous control through monitoring and evaluation

Create a database system to be systematically updated

Identify status as well risk or opportunities indicators

**(Partidário, 2007, 2012)**

In synthesis

## Challenges in Strategic Thinking for Sustainability

Imagine the future you want that enable opportunities

- Act now to reach the future, keep view in the long-term
- Be selective, systemic and focused on what matters
- Put emphasis on values, not on problems (constructive)
- Change, adapt (flexible), learn (resilient)
- Stimulate creative learning and collaboration through dialogues
- Build trust, collective intelligence, embracing plural

## Strategic-thinking in SEA for sustainability



Be strategic - open minds

Don't be afraid of change

Develop an approach of looking at the **strategic development choices**, considering environment and sustainability, **rather than** looking at the **effects** of plan and programme