

# Action-to-Outcome Mapping

## Strategic Planning that Incorporates Systems Thinking and Facilitated Conversation

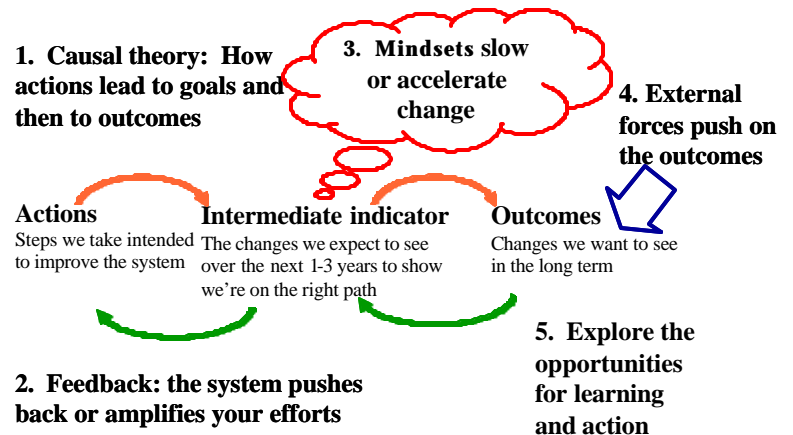
### Sustainability Institute

#### The Opportunity

Sustainability Institute, a not-for-profit center that applies systems thinking and organizational learning approaches to economic, environmental and social challenges, offers strategic planning sessions for a wide range of groups.

#### The Approach

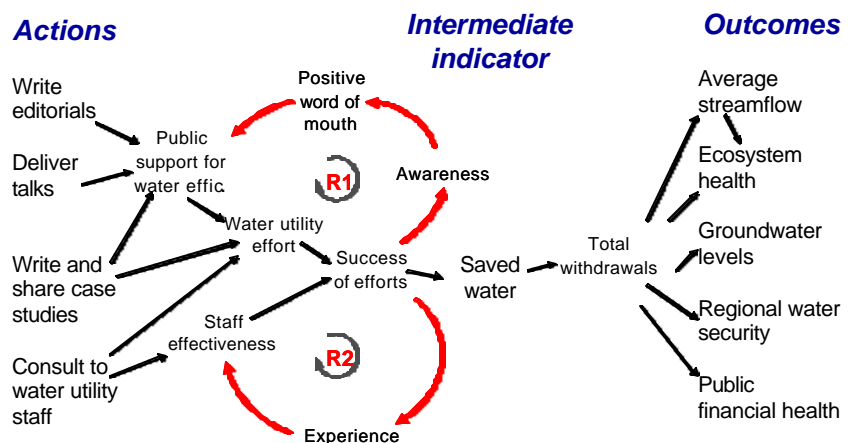
Action-to-Outcome mapping helps teams improve their thinking about how their policies and actions in the world could best achieve desired outcomes while tapping into the reinforcing and balancing effects of the broader system. A facilitator leads the group through a five-step process of brainstorming, small group work, systems mapping, and structured conversation.



#### Deliverables

Typical results include:

- More widely-shared group understanding about how actions will yield results
- Clearer ways to measure progress
- Ideas about how to tap into self-reinforcing processes and avoid resistance in the system
- Better strategies for addressing the mindsets and world-views that underlie people's behavior
- A systems map linking actions to outcomes

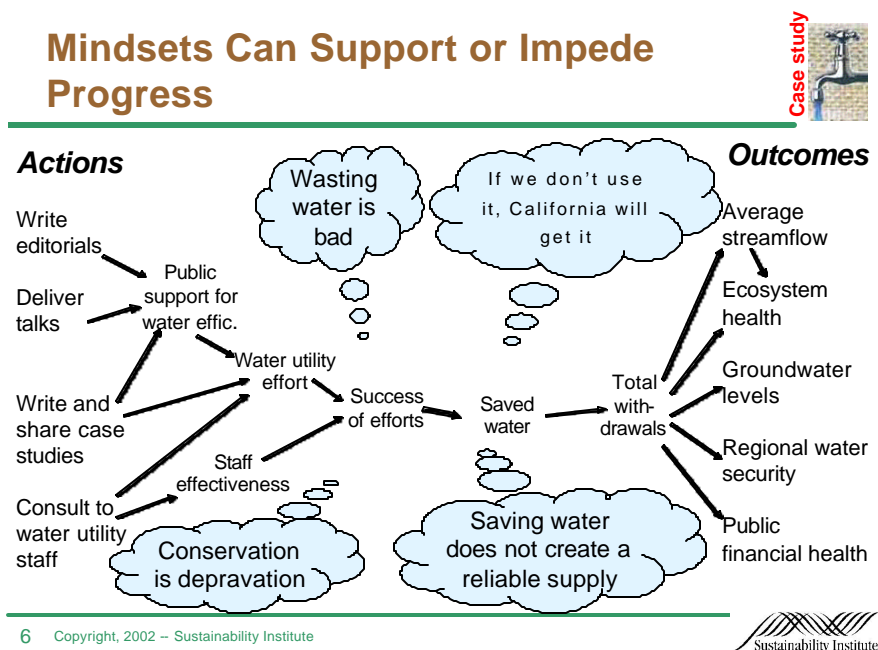


## Results

Sustainability Institute has used the action-outcomes approach with teams that work in a range of areas, from agriculture to environmental policy to forestry to philanthropy. One participant wrote:

The session forced us to articulate assumptions behind our actions and decisions. It forced us to understand the inter-linkages between the various intermediate outcomes. What I liked in the methodology was the manner in which all of the thinking and creation was done interactively and it had a "Polaroid" feel of watching an image appear where there was none. I liked that in the available time we managed to complete one logical piece and that really triggered the appetite for us to do more.

-- Suresh Subramanian, Waitt Foundation



## Scheduling a Consulting Session

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