

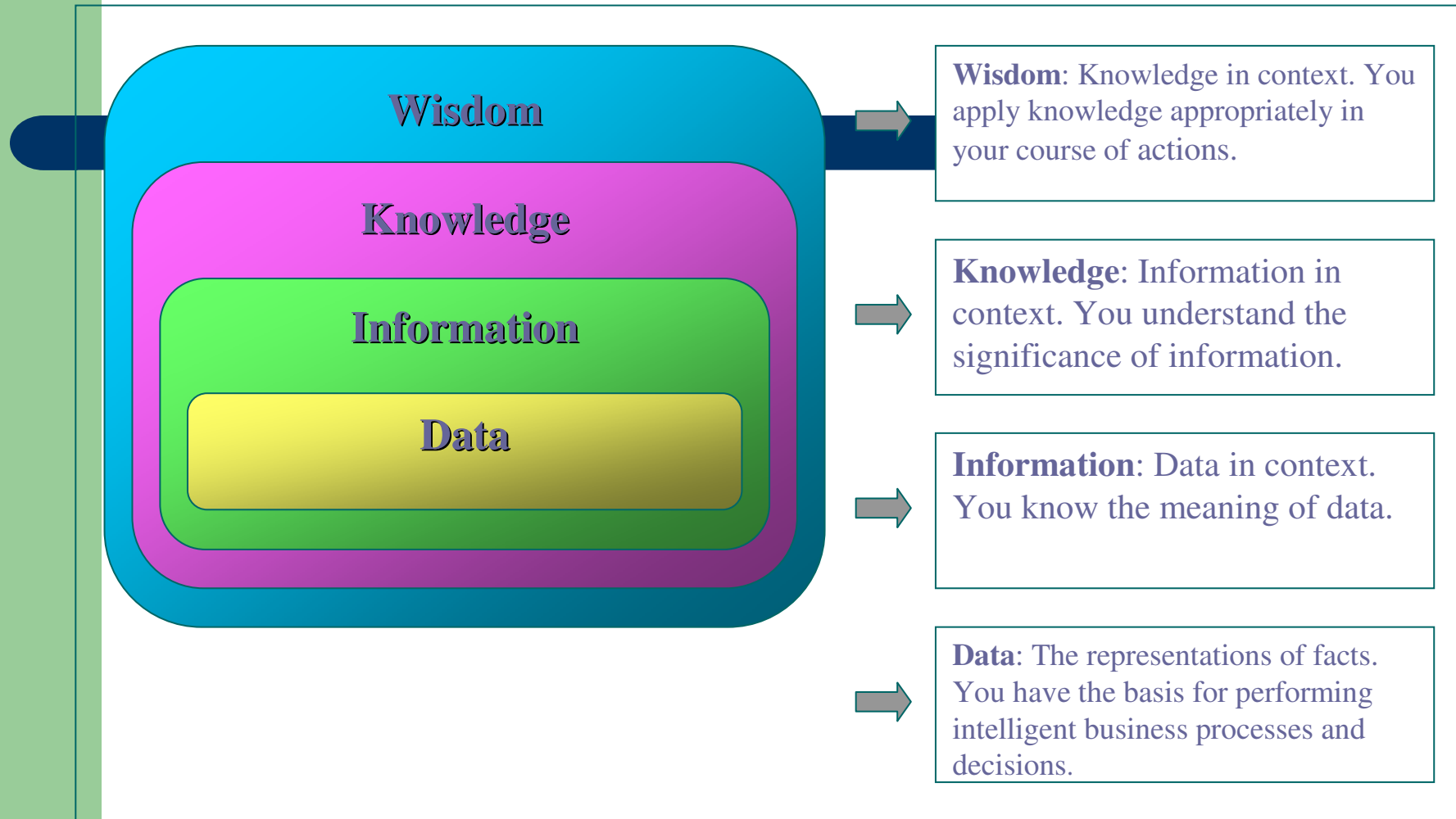
RAPID APPRAISAL OF AGRICULTURAL (ACTOR) KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM(RAAKS)

Wise words

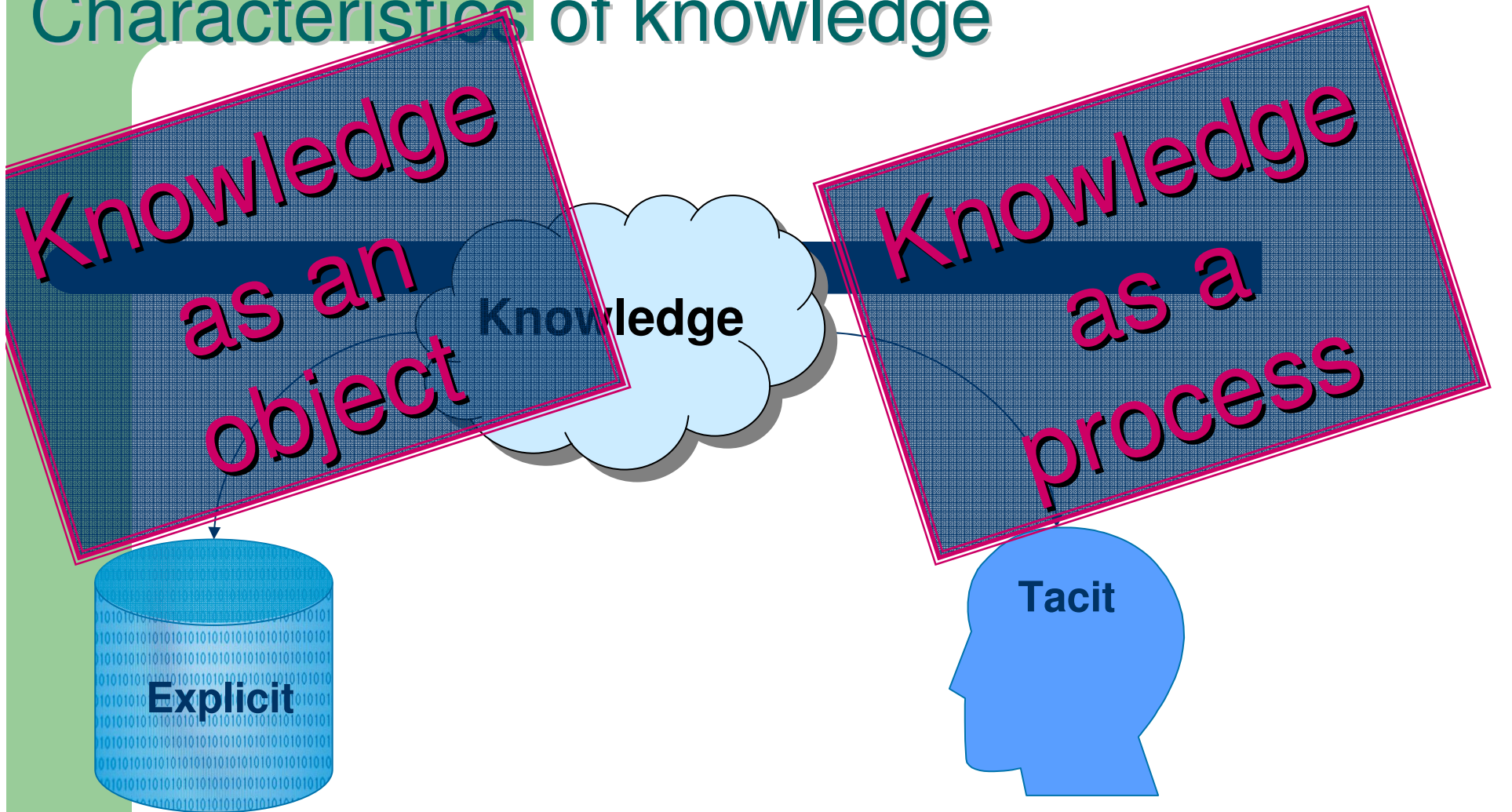
Planning is bringing the future into the present so you can do something about it now.

Alan Lakein, time management “guru”

What is knowledge?



Characteristics of knowledge



- Codified
- Transmittable
- Formal, systematic language

- Personal
- Context-specific
- Hard to formalise / communicate

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Michael Polanyi (1958)

Background

- *Systems thinking, multiple perspectives and joint learning, these are the key words in RAAKS.*
- *Born as a practical method of participatory diagnosis for small farmers in Colombia, it has been refined in appearance. Most of the research and development has been co-ordinated by the department of Communication and Innovation Studies of the Wageningen Agricultural University under the auspices of Dr. Paul Engel and Prof. Niels Rolling.*
- *Professionals in development often recognise elements in RAAKS (e.g. Actors, Objectives, Linkages) as already a part of the methodologies they use. The added value of RAAKS is its systematic approach to the monitoring, evaluating and improving the performance of an organisation in relation to other actors.*

Process Approach

- *Like other participatory approaches, RAAKS does not offer a recipe for change but a description of an action-oriented process. RAAKS consists of three phases: A) problem identification, B) constraints and opportunities, and (C) action planning. These phases do not suggest a strict chronological order. They should be seen more as a cycle of steps which can be continuously repeated.*
- *RAAKS distinguishes itself by focusing attention upon the social organisation of innovation; the way social actors (people and organisations) build and maintain relationships with each other in order to foster agricultural innovation.*
- *How do social actors organise themselves to learn, how do they network, co-operate and communicate for innovation, what hampers their capacity to learn and what helps them to learn new practices faster? These are central research questions in RAAKS[1].*

[1]Reproduced from: Engel, Salomon, Fernandez, Dieckmann (1995). RAAKS: A participatory methodology for improving innovative performance in agriculture. Wageningen: AUW/CTA/IAC/IARED.

Applications

- *RAAKS can be applied for different purposes such as evaluation of extension activities, market research or participatory planning. RAAKS can also be used to help solve a specific problem (e.g. reverse trends of malnutrition), to identify development activities in a region or to evaluate a practice (e.g. organic farming in East Africa). Through the years, experiences have been gained in other sectors such as health care, traffic and transport, and tourism. Therefore, some propose to change the word “Agriculture” in RAAKS for “Actor”.*
- *In the first phase of RAAKS the problem is explored, stakeholders are identified, as well as their environment. This is called the knowledge system.*

Applications cont.

- *In the second phase, eight analytical perspectives or windows are offered. These windows focus on different characteristics of the knowledge system. Each window provides tools and checklists for data collection and analysis. Here a selection of windows and tools has to be made. The choice depends on the problem situation at hand, the team's preferences and the time and human power available. Some of the windows partly overlap.*
- *In phase C, all efforts are directed towards composing a joint action plan to improve communication and collaboration.*

Overview of RAAKS

Phase A: Problem definition and system identification

- **A1: Objective of the analysis** (terms of reference)
 - What do we want to achieve?
- **A2: Identify relevant actors**
 - *Who are they?*
- **A3: Tracing diversity in actor Objectives**
 - *What do they pursue?*
- **A4: Context**
 - *What factors are most important?*
- **A5: Redefinition of the problem situation**
 - *What are the problems to be assessed?*
 - *Agreed terms of reference or redefinition?*

RAAKS Overview cont.

Phase B: Analysis of constraints and opportunities

- ***B1: Actor Analysis***
 - *What are their characteristics?*
- ***B2: Task Analysis***
 - *Who does What?*
- ***B3: Communication analysis***
 - *Their jargon: do they understand each other?*
 - *What issues do they find important?*
- ***B4: Integration analysis***
 - *Who has links with whom and why?*
 - *What is its significance?*

RAAKS Overview cont.

- **B5: Co-ordination analysis**
 - *Who is the most influential actor?*
- **B6: Knowledge network analysis**
 - *What are sources of information?*
 - *For whom?*
- **B7: Impact analysis**
 - *Does the system achieve what the actors expect?*
 - *Effectiveness and efficiency?*
- **B8: Summarising knowledge system analysis**
 - *What clusters, networks or subsystems can be identified?*
 - *What are the main constraints and opportunities?*

RAAKS Overview cont.

Phase C: Action Planning

- ***C1: Knowledge management analysis***
 - *What can the actors do to improve the system?*
- ***C2: Actor potential analysis***
 - *Who can do what?*
- ***C3: Planning***
 - *Who does what, when and how?*

Why do we appraise Knowledge?

- “The speed at which an actor/organisation can learn and employ knowledge is a decisive factor in competition and change management” –Prof. Peter Pribilla
- So that we can manage it better:
 - To create and maintain a repository of an actor/organisational knowledge
 - To create institutional memory
 - To gather, organise, distribute, and make knowledge available to persons and teams who share expertise and interests throughout an organisation
 - To enable knowledge sharing

Three major aspects to be managed

Technology (IT)

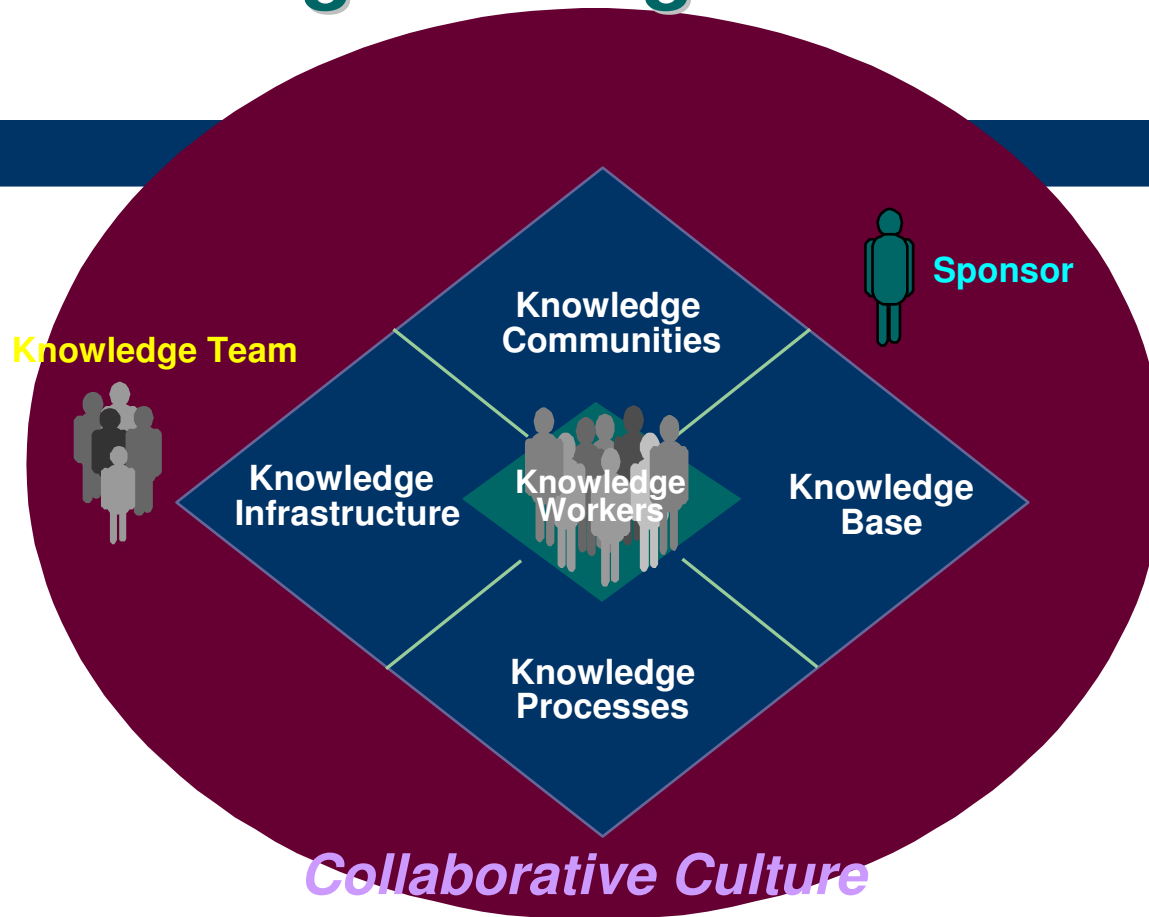


**Knowledge
Management**

**Processes
(Codification)**

**People
(Connectivity)**

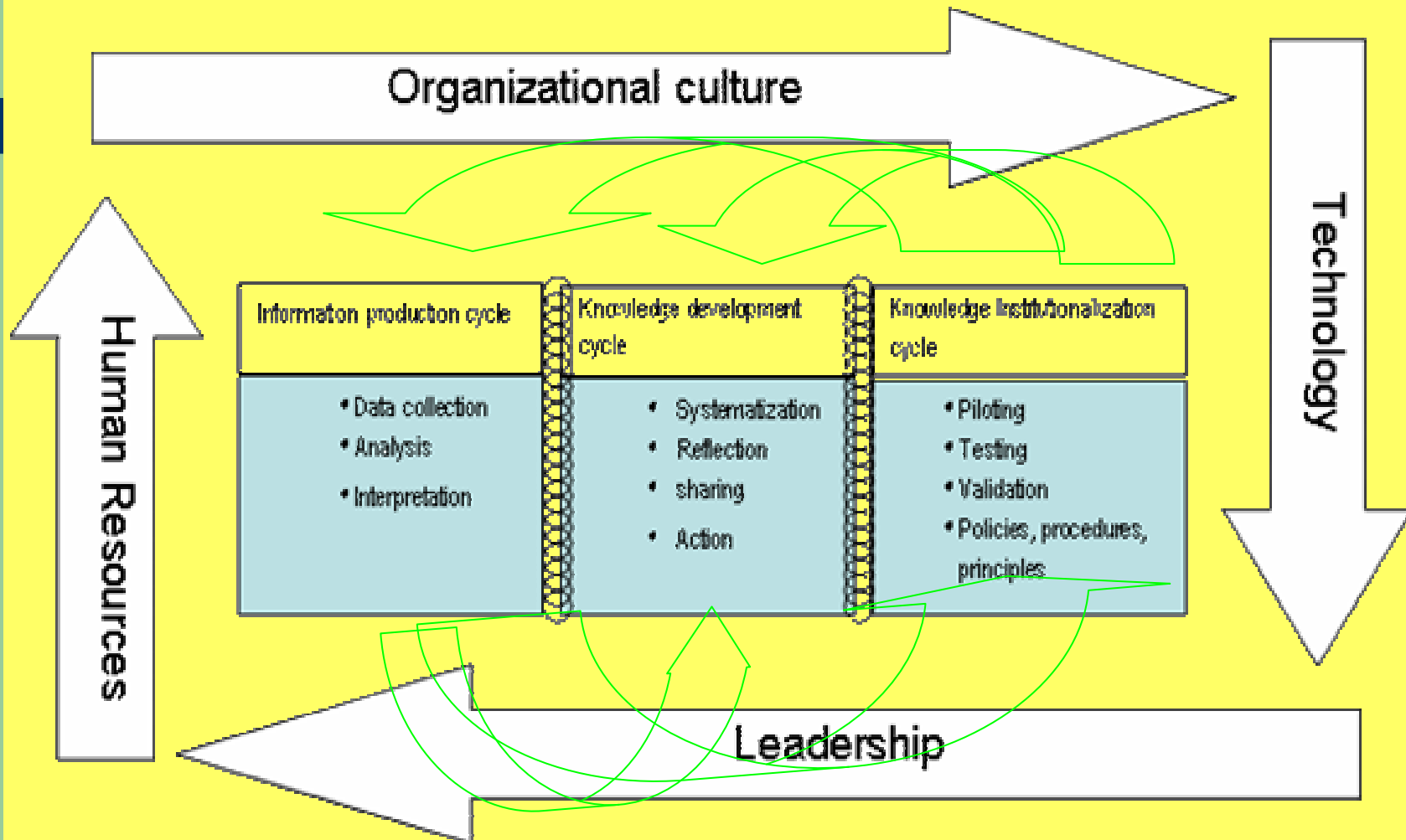
Knowledge Management



To be effective, Knowledge Management has to be more than just a technology solution.

The Knowledge Management Strategy

Knowledge creation and critical external factors for implementation of a KM strategy



Source: FDC 1st year evaluation, 2007