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Bringing Global Thinking to Local Sustainability Efforts: A Collaborative Project for the Boston Region

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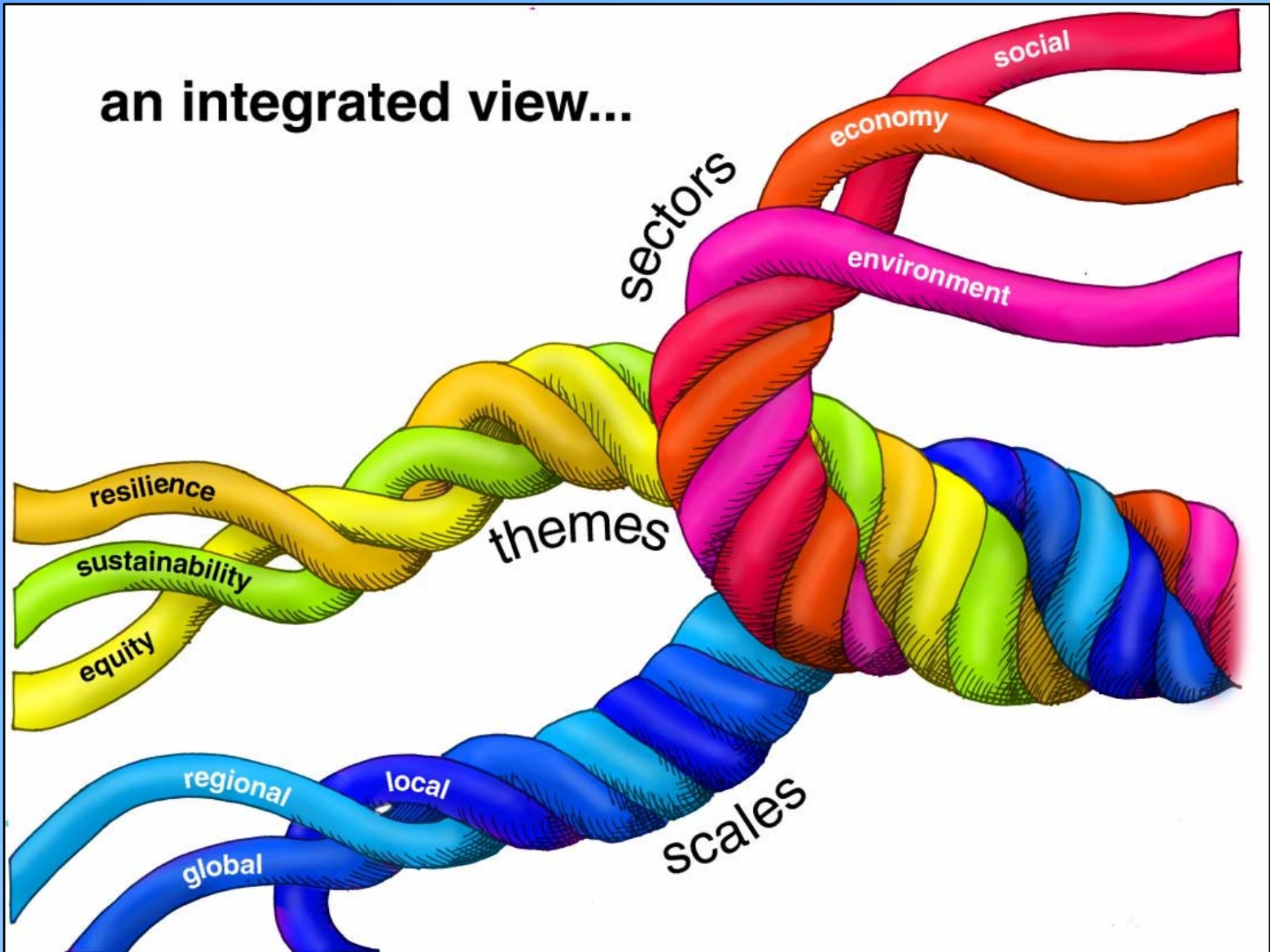
Overview of Presentation

1. Project Background
2. Scope of Work
3. Intended outcomes

1. Project Background

- Increasing global economic, social and environmental interconnectedness
- Uneven distribution of impacts and benefits
- Emergence of urgent large-scale problems: climate change, loss of biodiversity, decline of freshwater resources
- Clear need for preventative approaches and for linking local and global efforts

an integrated view...



Local and Global Links

- Since Earth Summit 1992, thousands of local initiatives begun (ICLEI and Agenda 21)
- Many local successes, but few/weak linkages to global issues
- Sustainable communities in an unsustainable world?
- How to strengthen local-global connectivity
- “Think locally, act globally”

Project Collaborators

- Tellus Institute
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
- The Boston Foundation Indicators Project
- MA State Sustainability Program
- Plus project Working Group of outside stakeholders



2. Scope of Work

- Review and coordinate with MetroFuture process
- Stakeholder consultation
- Data collection, review and synthesis
- Enhance PoleStar scenario building tool
- Develop scenarios: BAU, Policy Reform, Deep Change
- Identify policy and other implementation opportunities

MetroFuture Planning Process

- Coordinated by MAPC, regional planning agency for 101 communities in Boston region (~ 3 mil pop)
- 3-phase process:
 - Stakeholder visioning (complete)
 - Data analysis and scenario development (ongoing)
 - Implementation strategies (next)
- Tellus coordinating closely with MAPC
 - Serve on MetroFuture technical advisory group
 - MAPC participates in our project working group

Stakeholder Consultation

- Build on input to MetroFuture process
 - Analyzed 3,000 visioning statements for elements of sustainability
- Established 25 person Stakeholders Group
- Held Stakeholders meeting in June
- Developed project website and e-discussion group: www.bostonscenarios.org

Data Collection, Review & Synthesis

- Gather recent and current data (iterative)
 - demographics
 - economic activity
 - industry
 - transportation
 - air quality
 - energy production/use
 - health
 - employment and income
 - income
 - land use
 - water quantity and quality
 - solid waste
 - food and agriculture
- Rely on existing sources (MAPC, Indicators Project, state)
- Refine as appropriate as better data becomes available

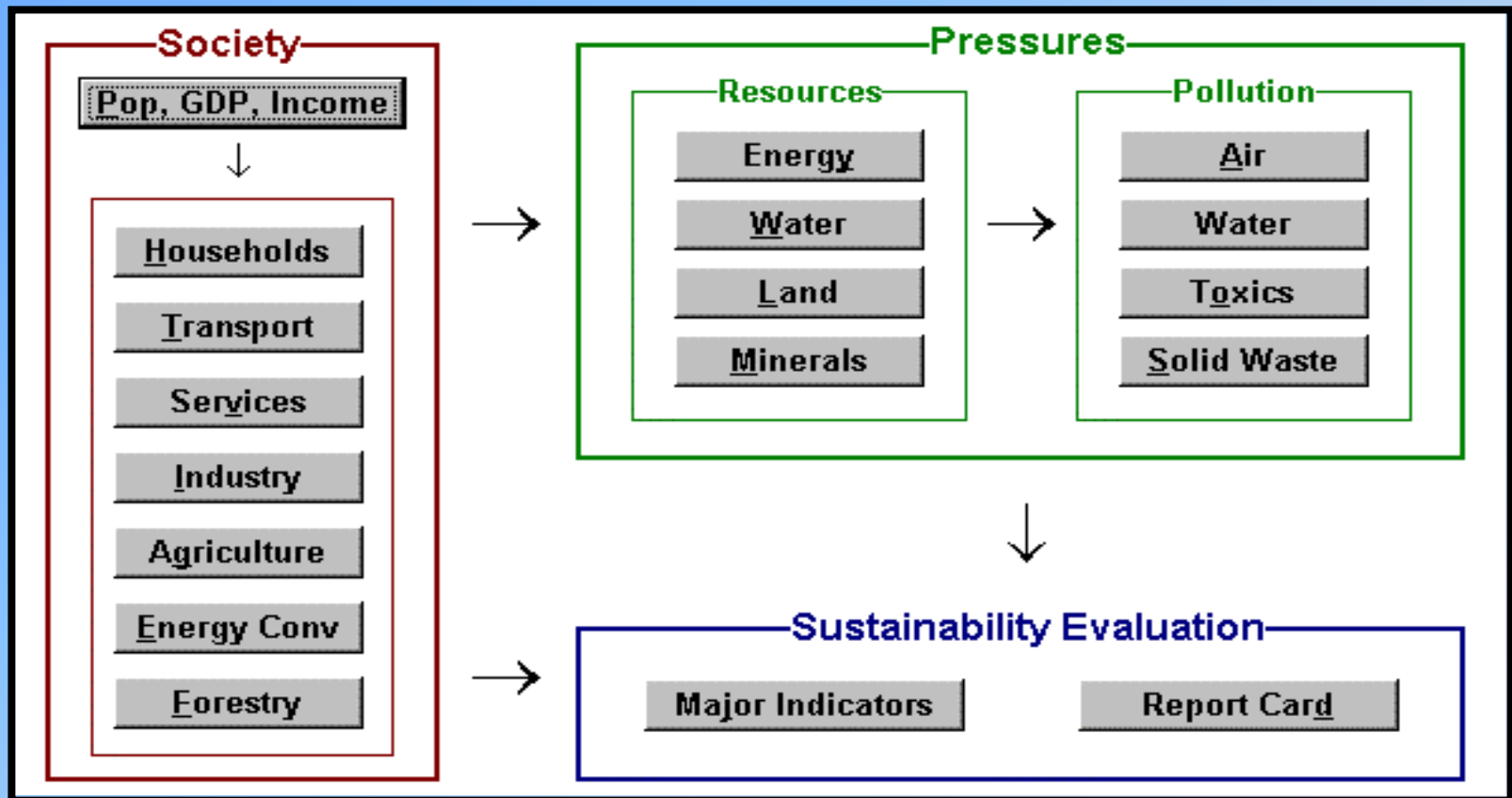
POLESTAR

A TOOL FOR SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES

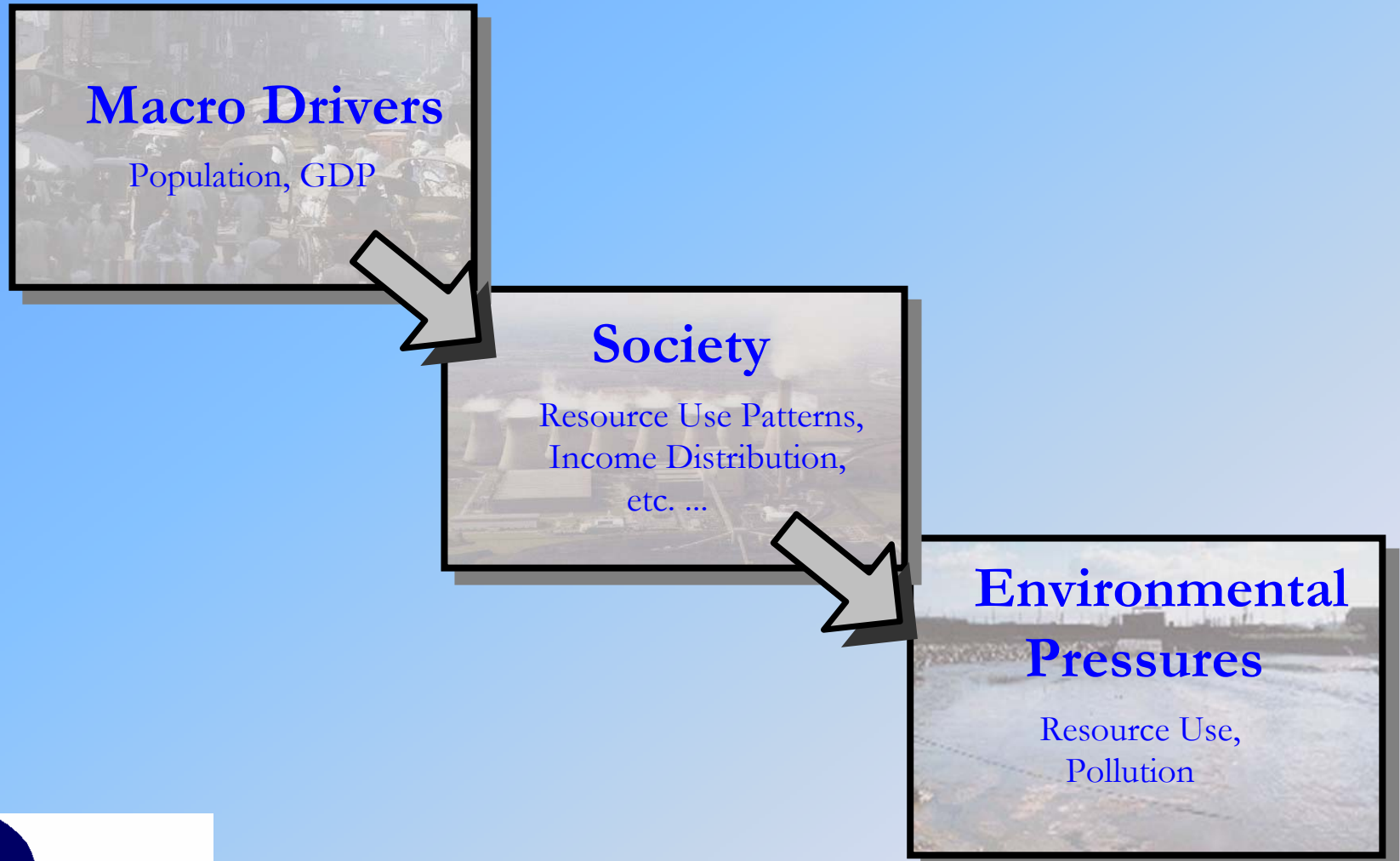
- Decision support system for sustainability studies, local to global
- Developed by Tellus in early 1990s
- Not a rigid model, but an open framework to build integrated scenarios plus a database
- Allows user to identify driving forces, address critical uncertainties and explore alternative futures
- Current enhancements include: improved user interface, inclusion of high-level levers, better graphics

The PoleStar System

A Framework for Sustainability Assessment



Organization



Develop Scenarios for Boston Region

- Iterative process with collaborators and stakeholders: first order scenarios complete and under review
- Three scenarios being developed:
 - **Business-As-Usual (BAU)**: little change in production and consumption patterns; equity not addressed
 - **Policy Reform**: technological and policy measures emphasized to moderate ecological destruction and social inequality
 - **Deep Change**: changes in values lead to changes in lifestyles and institutions (along with technological innovations) to achieve sustainability with global responsibility

Implementation Opportunities

- MetroFuture process
- MA State Sustainability Program
- MPO Regional Transportation Plan
- MA Climate Action Plan
- Boston Indicators Project
- Other NGO initiatives

3. Intended Outcomes

- Long-term goal is to support regional planning for sustainability by providing tools and methods that promotes preventative planning in an integrated systems framework
- Short term goals include:
 - Apply the integrated systems approach in the Boston context using PoleStar to examine alternative scenarios
 - Support planning & inform policy-making at local, regional and state levels to achieve a sustainable future for the region consistent with global responsibility
 - Promote networking of various planning efforts in the Boston region – from local to regional, state and federal