

FORHP Rural Northern Border Outreach Program

Beyond the Grant Cycle: *Positioning Programs for Sustainable Impact*

Thursday, January 29, 2026

1:00-2:00 PM ET



Learning Objectives

- Describe and understand the eight components of the GHPC Sustainability Framework and their relationship to long-term program success
- Identify common sustainability challenges and effective strategies as experienced by former grantees
- Apply insights and lessons learned to inform sustainability planning for Northern Border projects

Sustainability Definition

When programs or services continue because they are valued and draw support and resources.

What Makes the Difference?

Chance of Sustainability



Are they tied?

Organizational Characteristics

Why do some programs sustain while others do not?

Conduct Study of Grantees
Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP)

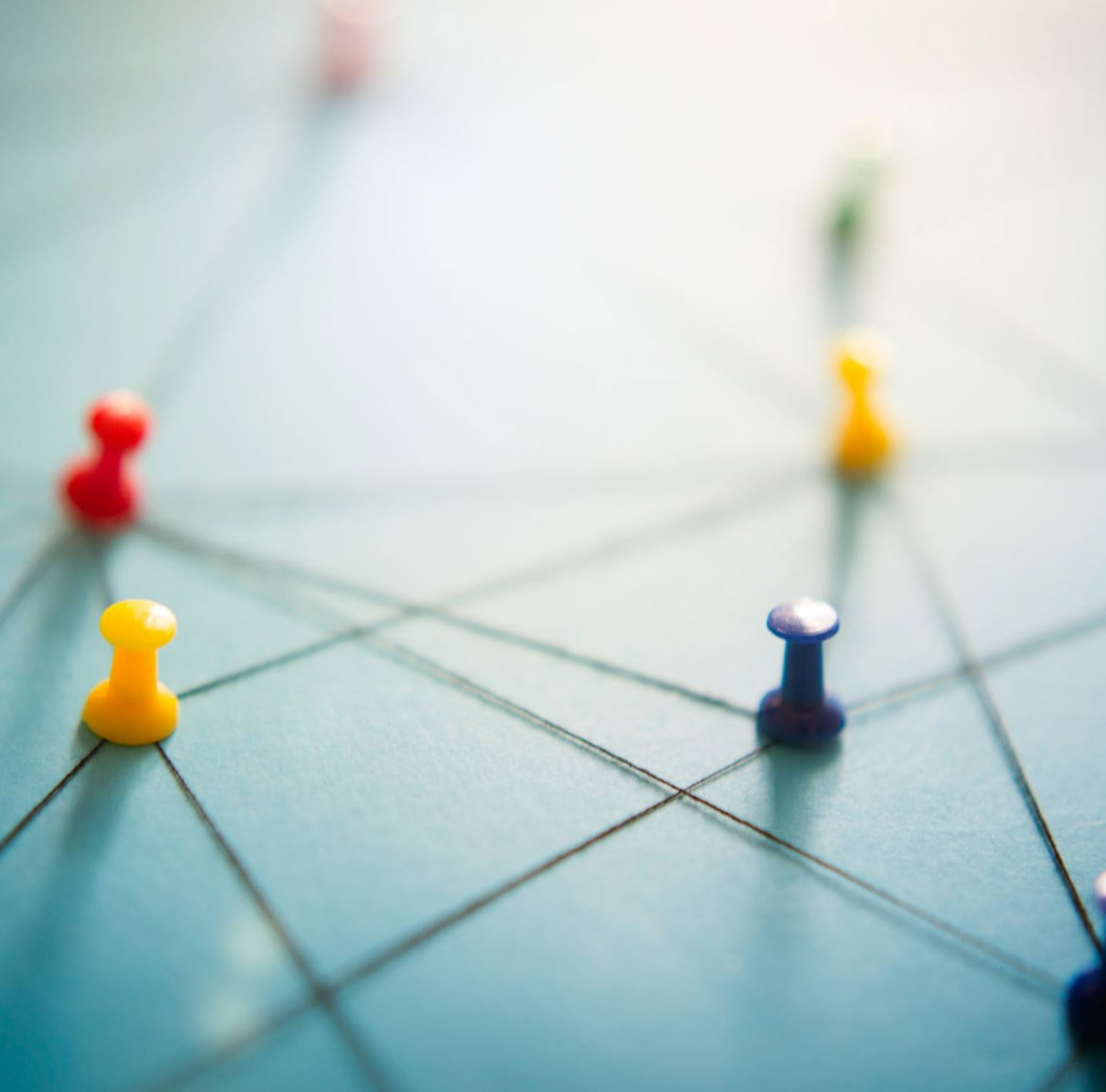


Assess Grantees
2009 and 2019



Literature Reviews






~~Organization~~

~~Project~~

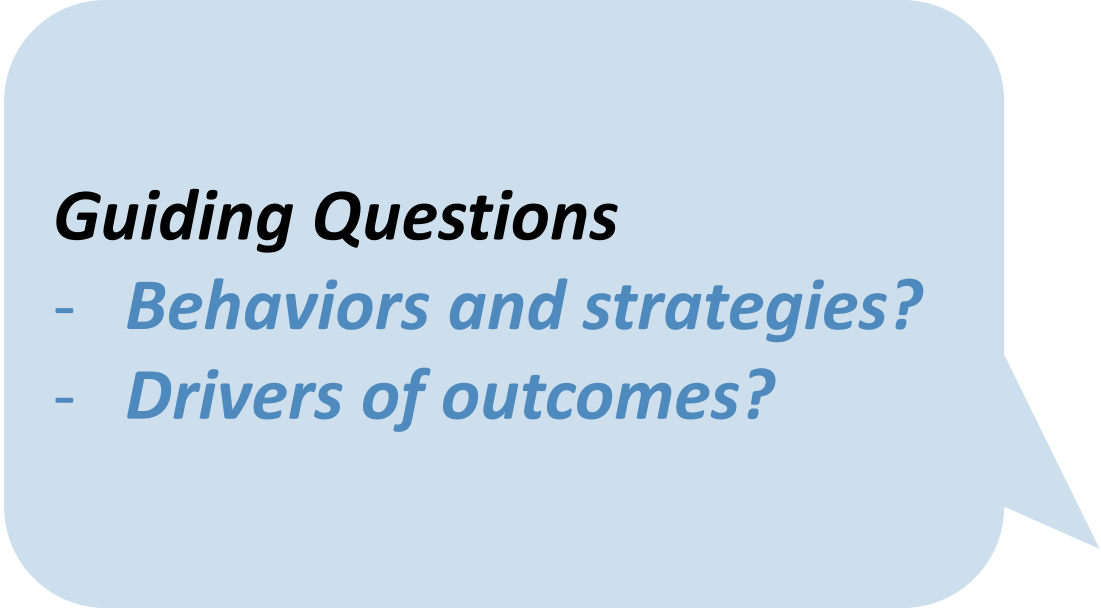
Behaviors ✓

Strategies ✓

Positioning for Sustained Success



**Understand the dynamics
that influence sustainability**



Guiding Questions

- *Behaviors and strategies?*
- *Drivers of outcomes?*



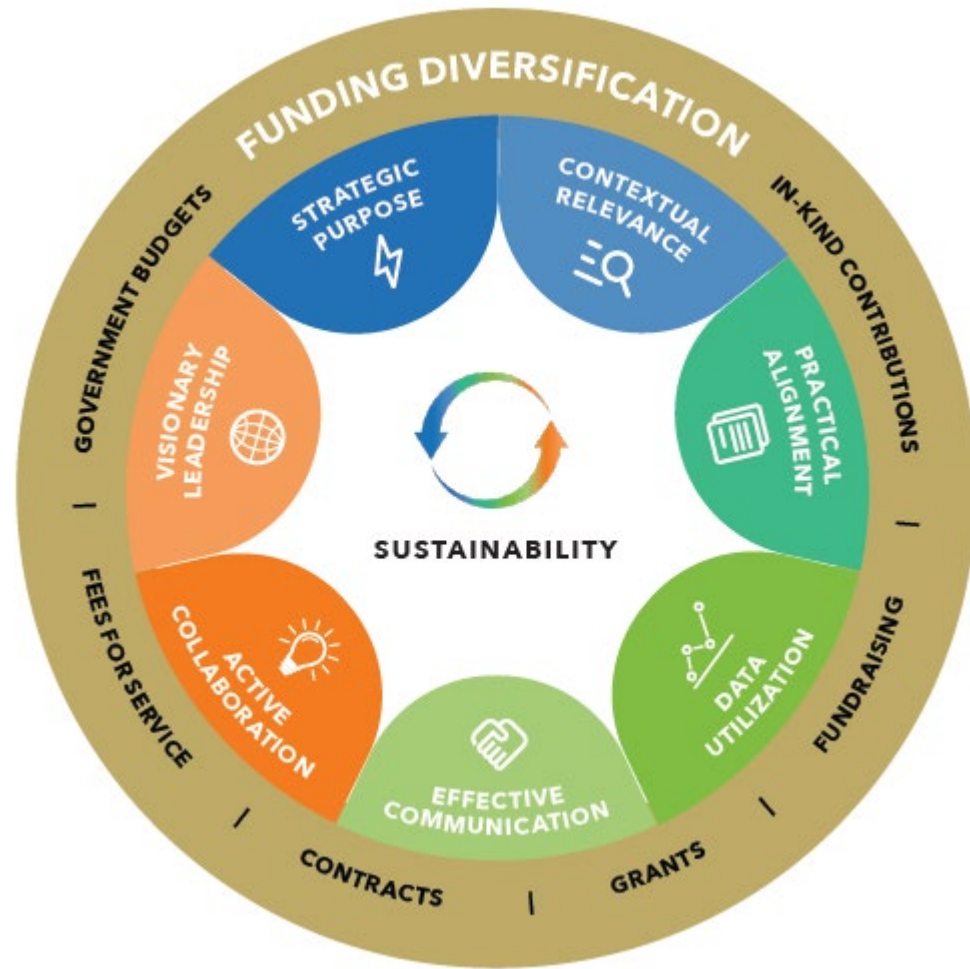
SUSTAINABILITY



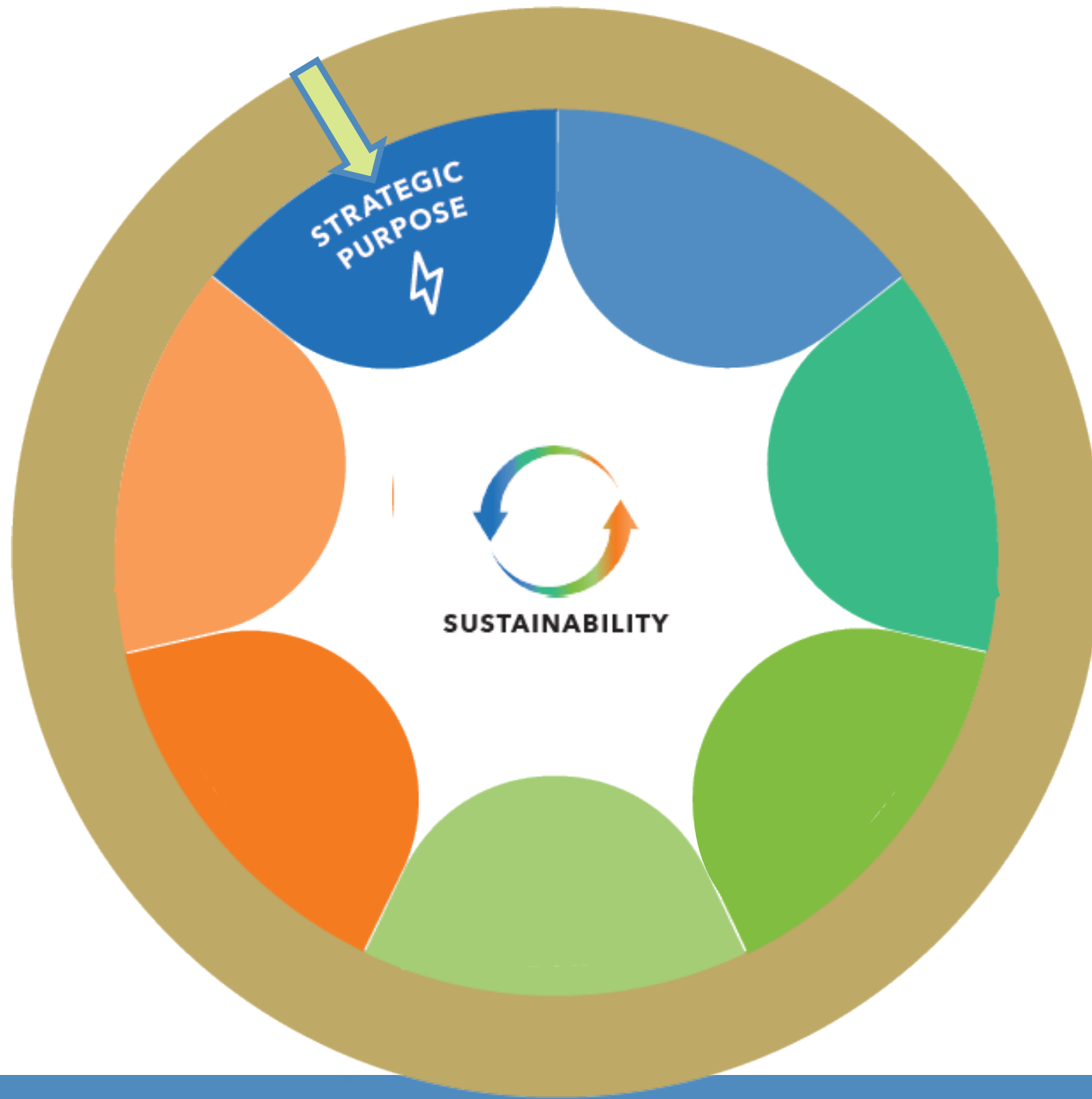
Framework

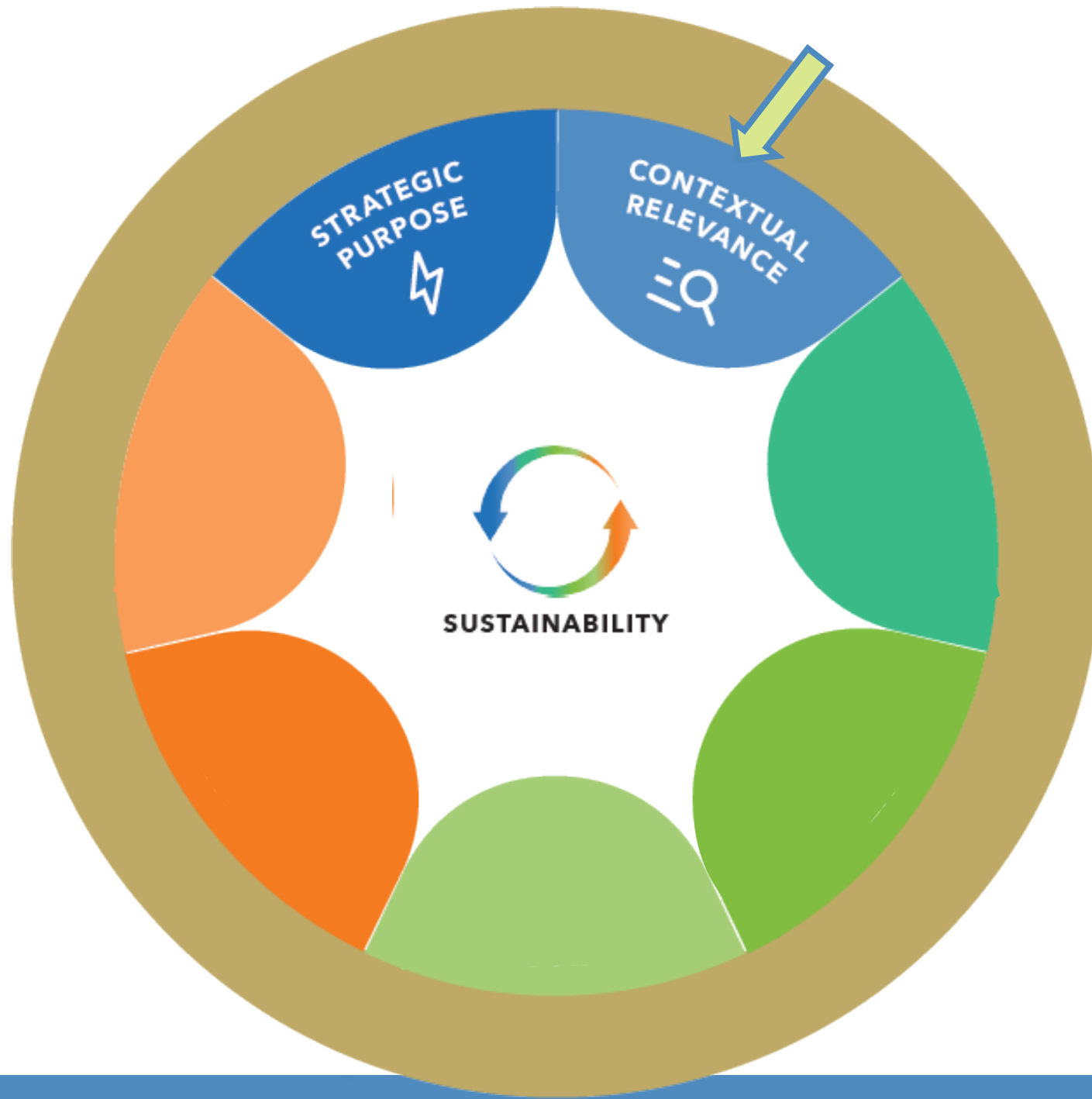


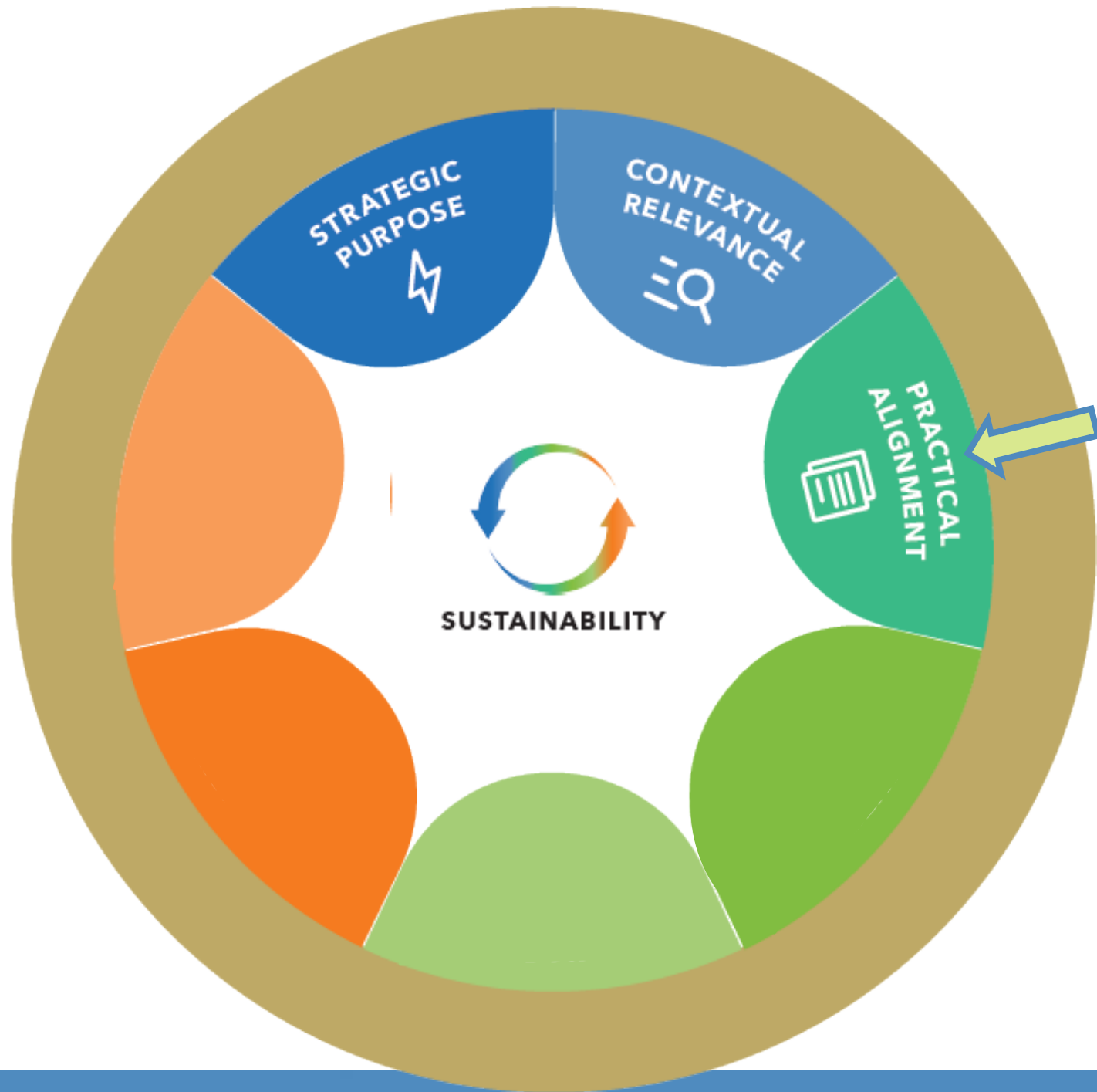
Sustainability Framework 2.0[©]

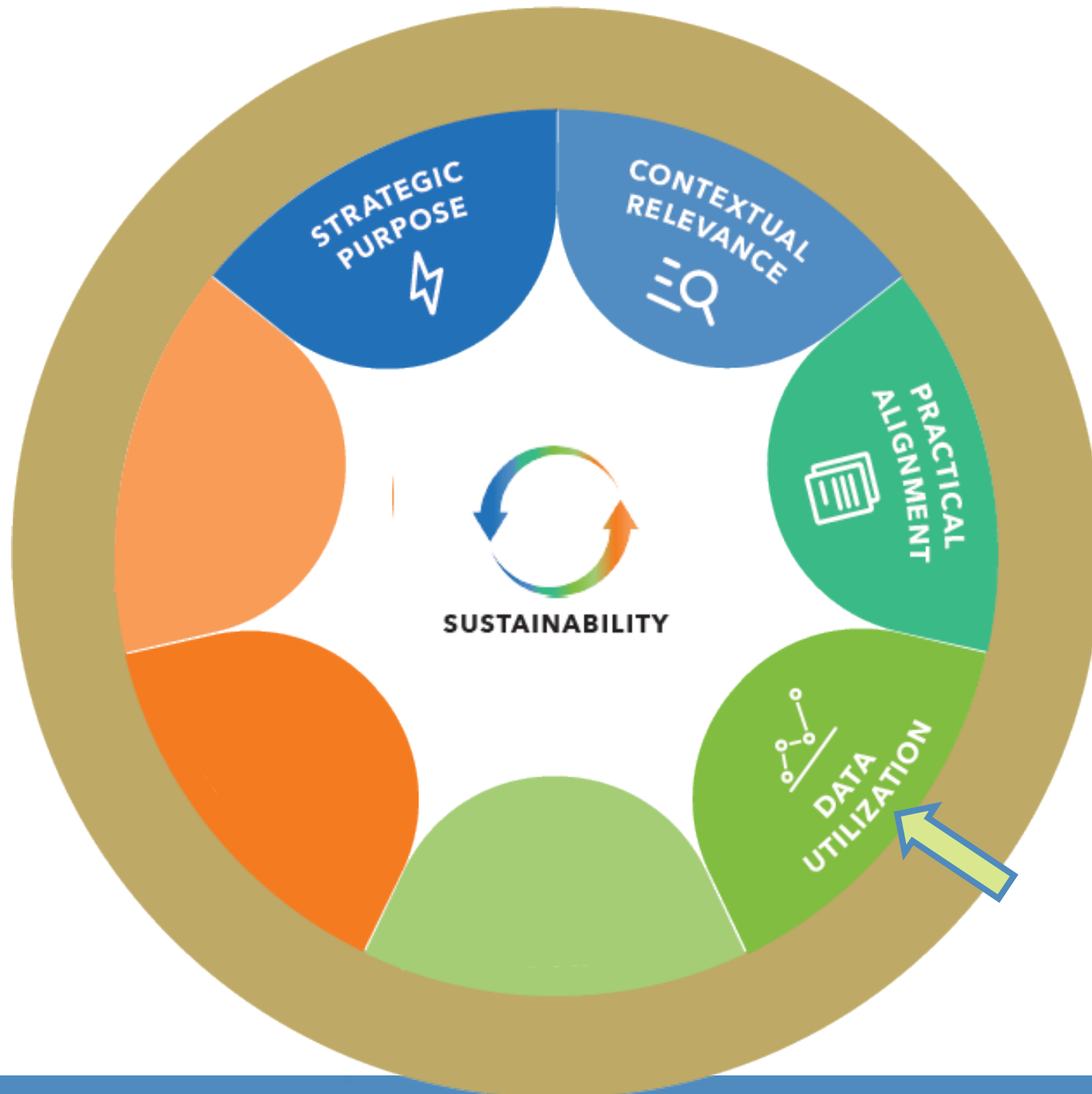


- **Strategic Purpose**
The collaborative or organization has a clearly defined, shared vision that guides its efforts and aligns with the mission and values of participating organizations.
- **Contextual Relevance**
The collaborative or organization adapts its efforts to the sociocultural, political, and economic environment, as well as trends and emerging issues.
- **Practical Alignment**
The collaborative or organization implements initiatives that provide a relevant solution in response to a need and demand expressed by the community.
- **Data Utilization**
Organizations collect, analyze, and use data to assess implementation and demonstrate the value and impact of efforts.
- **Effective Communication**
Critical information is exchanged among participating organizations and other stakeholders to create awareness and share successes of the initiative.
- **Active Collaboration**
The collaborative or organization brings together key stakeholders needed to address the issue with all sharing responsibility, risks, and rewards of their efforts.
- **Visionary Leadership**
Leaders provide strategic direction by inspiring others to achieve desired outcomes and directing resources to support sustainability of efforts.
- **Funding Diversification**
The collaborative or organization maintains and grows its efforts through a range of fiscal resources and supports generated with a purposeful and ongoing focus on sustainability planning.



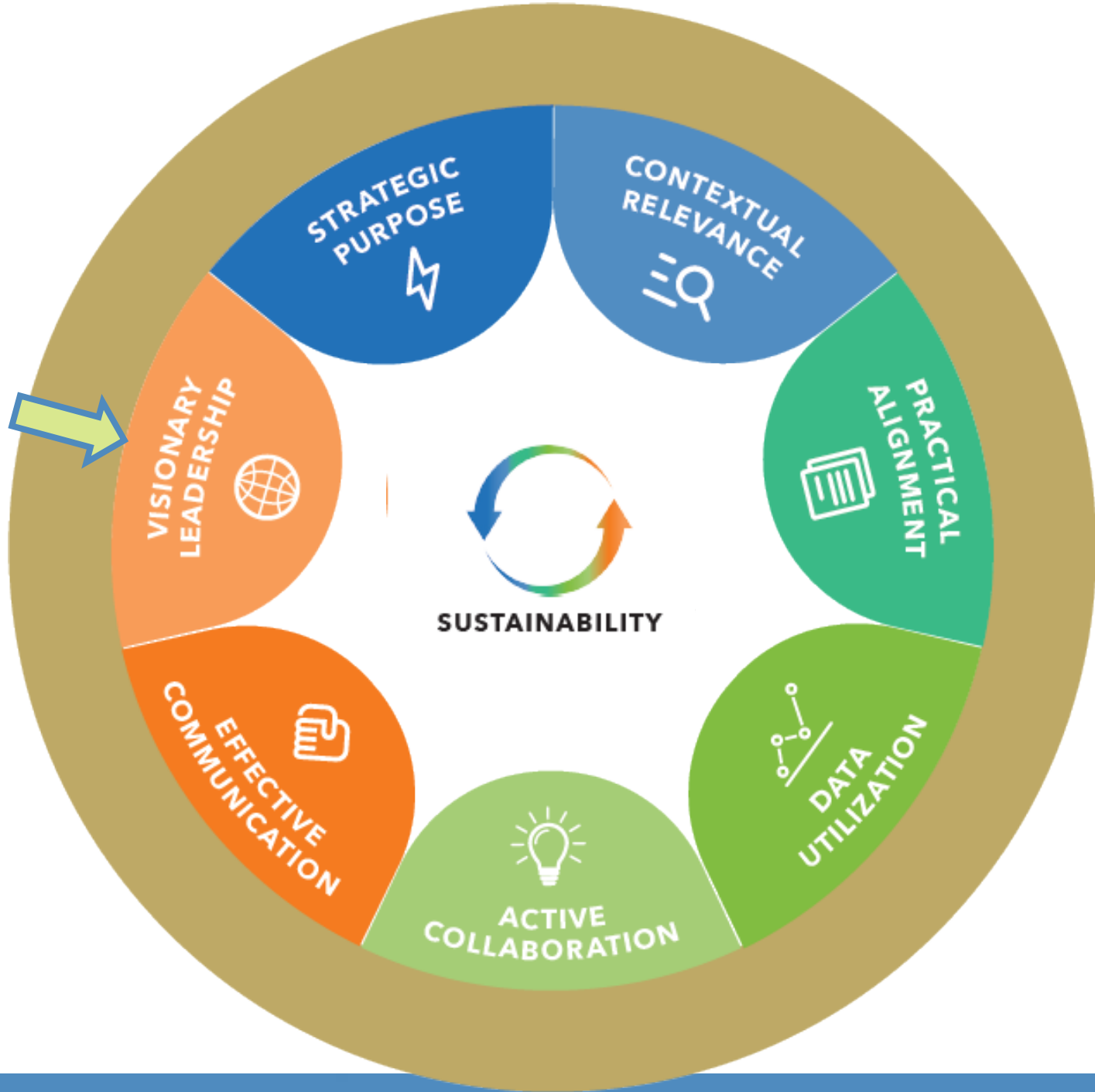


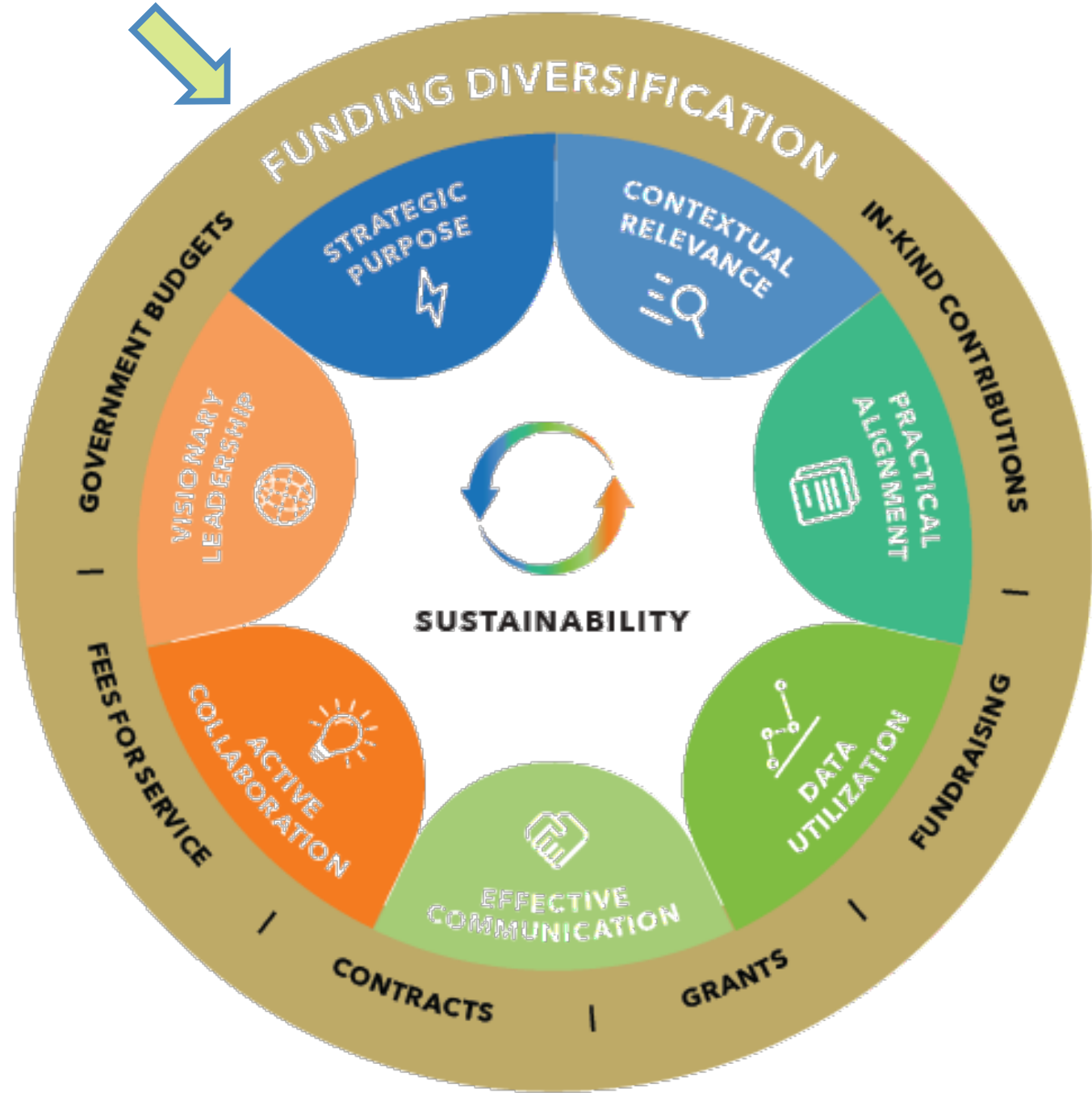














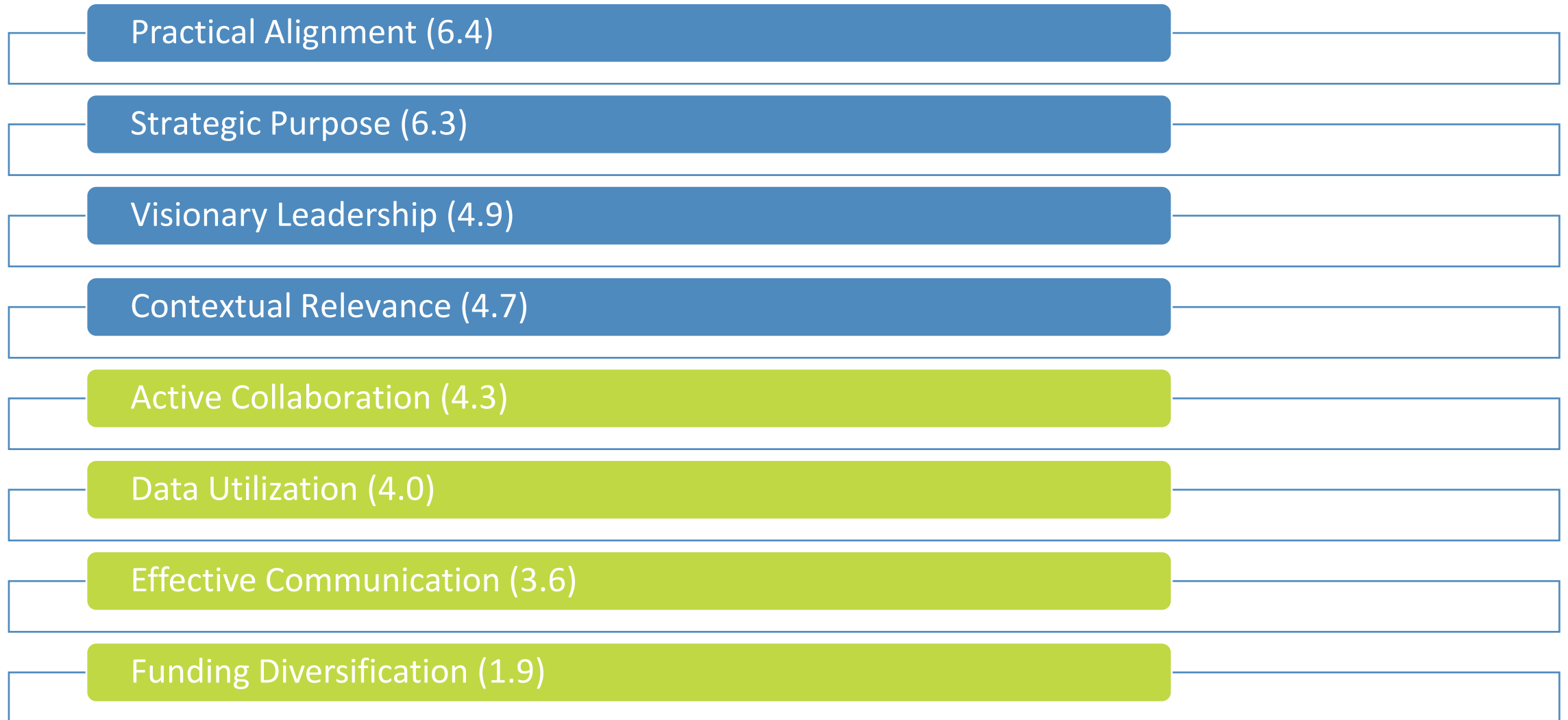
SUSTAINABILITY

Reflections
Experiences
Practices



Northern Border Grantee Feedback:

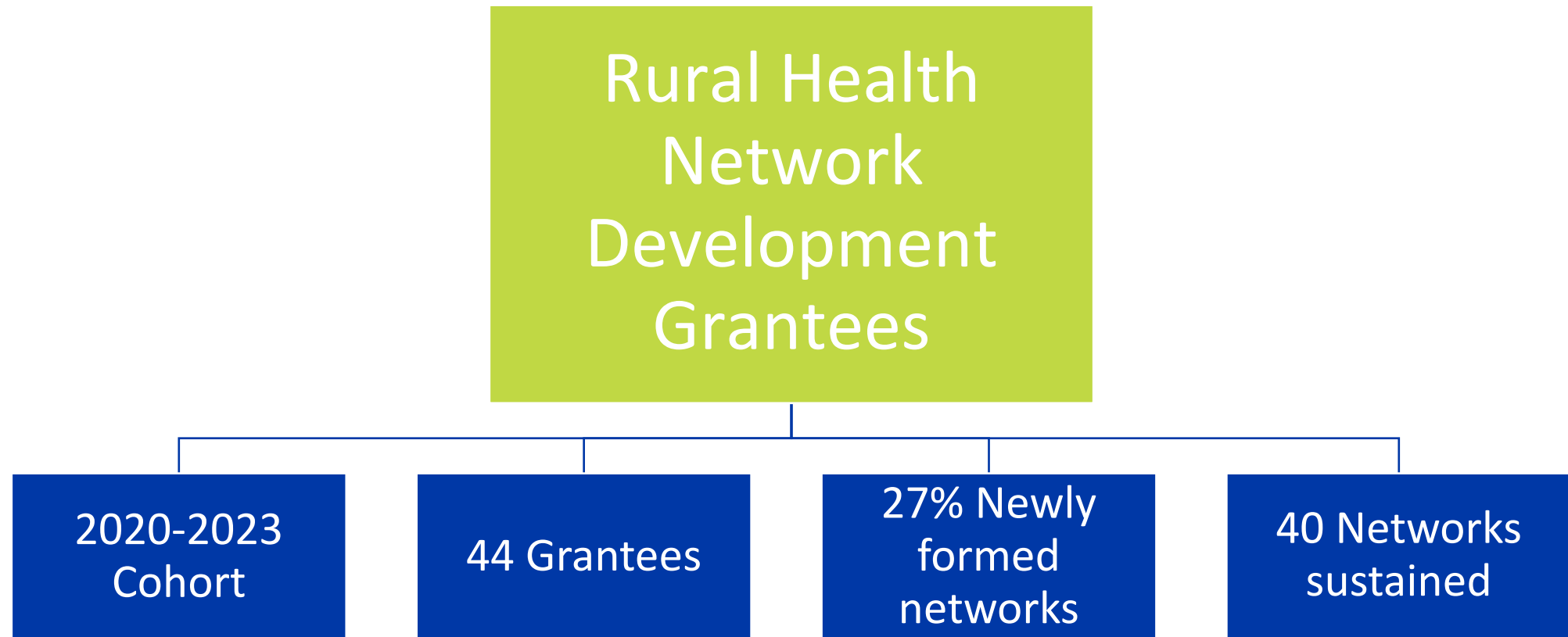
Most to Least Confident (lower score = less confident)



Reflections - Recent FORHP Grantees

Factors	Network Development Program	Outreach Program
Top Supporting	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Strategic purpose2. Visionary leadership3. Effective communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Active collaboration2. Funding diversification3. Data utilization
Top Challenges	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Active collaboration2. Data utilization3. Effective communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Funding diversification2. Contextual relevance3. Practical alignment

Rural Health Network Sustainability: Landscape Analysis



Network Development Grantees: Top Three Success Factors for Sustainability

Strategic Purpose

Co-designing mission and vision

Transparency

Trust and strengthened relationships

Visionary Leadership

Champions that can motivate community

Belief that change can happen

Lead implementation

Effective Communication

Create open environment for listening and discussions

Communicate consistently about data, reports, and project updates

Find shared meaning and standards through communication plan

Network Development Grantees: Top Three Challenging Factors for Sustainability

Active Collaboration

Multiple roles and potentially competing priorities

Awareness of misaligned mission/visions

Lean on governance documents

Data Utilization

Partner resistance, reluctance

Interoperability challenges

Co-design data collection plans and dashboards

Effective Communication

Staffing turnover

Partners in crisis mode

Addressing conflict resolution

Grantee Success Story - Funding Diversification

Established a Ways and Means Committee, which resulted in:

- Donations from local foundation
- Hospital funds
- Discretionary funding from state and federal government
- State grants
- Billing for services (CHW income \$30,000/month)

Rural Health Care Services Outreach Program: Sustainability Experiences

2021-2025 Cohort

60 Grantees

Analysis of Exit Interviews

**Identify Sustainability Challenges &
Strategies**

Outreach Grantees:

Top Factors Supporting Program Sustainability

Active Collaboration - partners see the value and are likely to sustain activities, collaboratively address challenges, grow recognition in the community

Funding Diversification - reimbursement, institutionalization, additional grants

Data Utilization - demonstrated cost savings, qualitative stories, and planning purposes

Practical Alignment - listening sessions, partnering with community sites, tailoring programs to the local context

Visionary Leadership - strong project directors, leaders at the lead or partnering organizations committed to continuing services

Outreach Grantees: Top Challenges to Program Sustainability



Capacity

workforce recruitment and retention, limited capacity of existing staff



Funding Diversification

overreliance on single or limited funding sources



Contextual Relevance

shifting policy landscape, potential funding cuts, changes to billing codes



Practical Alignment

lack of community buy-in, patients having to travel long distances

Sustainability

Awardees
acknowledged
the importance of
positioning for
sustainability early in
the grant cycle.

*“The importance of
robust and
continuous
communication
across various levels”*

*“A more in-depth understanding of
billing and reimbursement policies at
the start of the grant would also have
improved planning and integration of
virtual services”*

*“Successful projects of this nature
necessitate a collaborative effort
rather than individual endeavors”*

*“It takes time to determine
alternative ways to generate
revenue”*

Discussion

1. In what ways do these align with your personal experiences?
2. What are some examples of these factors either supporting or challenging your own program?
3. What steps are you taking to address or enhance them?

Factors

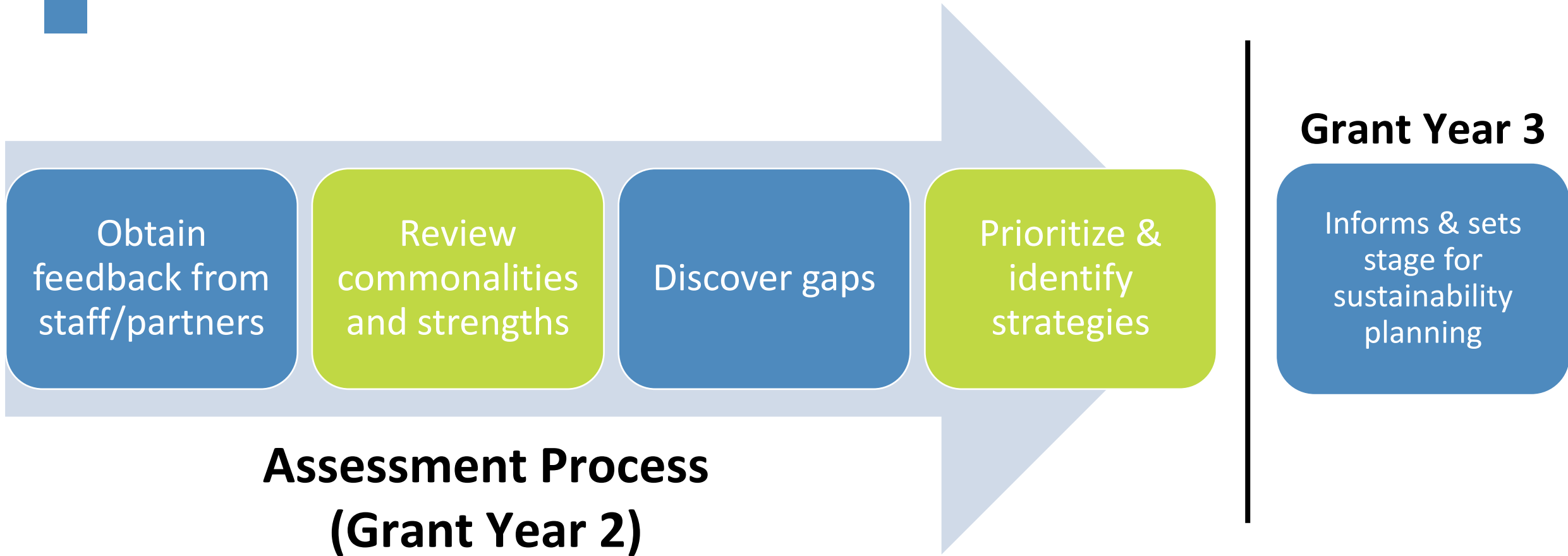
Higher Confidence

1. Practical Alignment
2. Strategic Purpose
3. Visionary Leadership
4. Contextual Relevance

Lower Confidence

1. Funding Diversification
2. Effective Communication
3. Data Utilization
4. Active Collaboration

Next Steps in the Sustainability Journey: Sustainability Assessment



Next Northern Border Webinar


Conducting a Sustainability Assessment

- When? - Early March 2026 (Final date TBD)

Stay tuned for a save-the-date/registration!

THE GHPC SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

Online Assessment Preparation Guide



The GHPC Sustainability Assessment is designed to help you reflect on your organization/ collaborative's current strengths and opportunities related to long-term sustainability. This structured process will help you identify what's working well, where additional attention may be helpful, and how to best position your work for lasting impact.

This assessment is grounded in a sustainability framework that includes eight key components that contribute to the long-term success of collaborative initiatives:

- Strategic Purpose
- Contextual Relevance
- Practical Alignment
- Data Utilization
- Active Collaboration
- Effective Communication
- Visionary Leadership
- Funding Diversification

Each component includes 2–3 indicators that describe specific practices or conditions related to sustainability.

HOW THE ASSESSMENT WORKS

For each indicator, you will be asked to rate your collaborative or organization using a 1–5 scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Haven't Started Yet	Thinking About It	Planning and Preparing	Taking Action	It's How We Work
We are unaware of this and have not yet begun work.	We are becoming aware and starting to consider how we might change.	We are actively planning and preparing to implement efforts.	We are actively implementing efforts but still refining and improving.	We have fully embedded efforts in our ongoing operations and practices.

To support consistent scoring, the assessment provides clear examples of what a 1 and a 5 look like for each indicator. Your responses should reflect your collaborative/organization's current reality, not where you hope to be in the future.

THE GHPC SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

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Thank You!

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