

SUDAC International Conference 2019

**From Thematic Consortia to Regional Clusters
of Cooperation**

**Prospects and Pitfalls:
The Perspective of a South Partner**

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I: Introduction: An overview of the scene in the Global South

The Global South is overwhelmed by impacts of global change and complex challenges of Sustainable Development

I: Introduction: An overview of the scene in the Global South



Traditional lifestyles, livelihood and land use systems are increasingly under pressure.

I: Introduction: An overview of the Scene in the Global South



Competing claims on diminishing natural resources from a growing number of different actors pose a severe threat to sustainability.

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I: Introduction: An overview of the scene in the Global South



Rapid Social and political transformations



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Rapid Social and political transformations



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Climate change



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II: The 2030 Agenda – Sustainable Development Goals



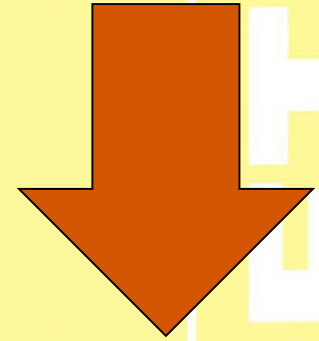
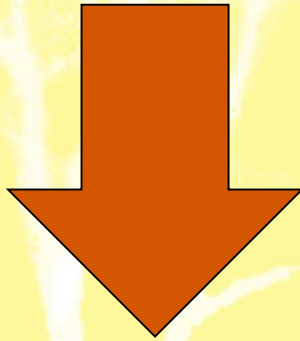
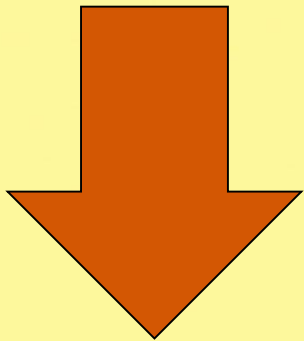
The SDGs (and their respective targets) reflect a global political programme; the outcome of long-term negotiations between parties at highest global political level

II: The 2030 Agenda – Sustainable Development Goals



The SDGs are not independent of each other; they are interconnected, and therefore create conflicts as well as synergies and co-benefits

II: The 2030 Agenda – Sustainable Development Goals



II: The 2030 Agenda – Sustainable Development Goals

Underlines 3 Critical Challenges:

i) Structural challenge: Is research and science as currently structured and practiced able to adequately/effectively deal with the complex challenges implied by the interconnectedness of the SDGs?

→ disciplinary silos especially so entrenched in the Global South; Easy to deal with individual SDGs

II: The 2030 Agenda – Sustainable Development Goals

ii) The challenge of resolving SDG Conflicts; Balancing trade offs and consolidating co-benefits

Does Research and Science have the capacity and competence to address the conflicts/trade offs and provide guidance to consolidate/capitalize the synergies and co-benefits?

iii) From global to local challenge

Does Research and Science have the capacity and competence to facilitate the translation process (from Global perspectives to Local realities), and effectively guide to delineate and accelerate promising transformation pathways?

II: The 2030 Agenda – Sustainable Development Goals

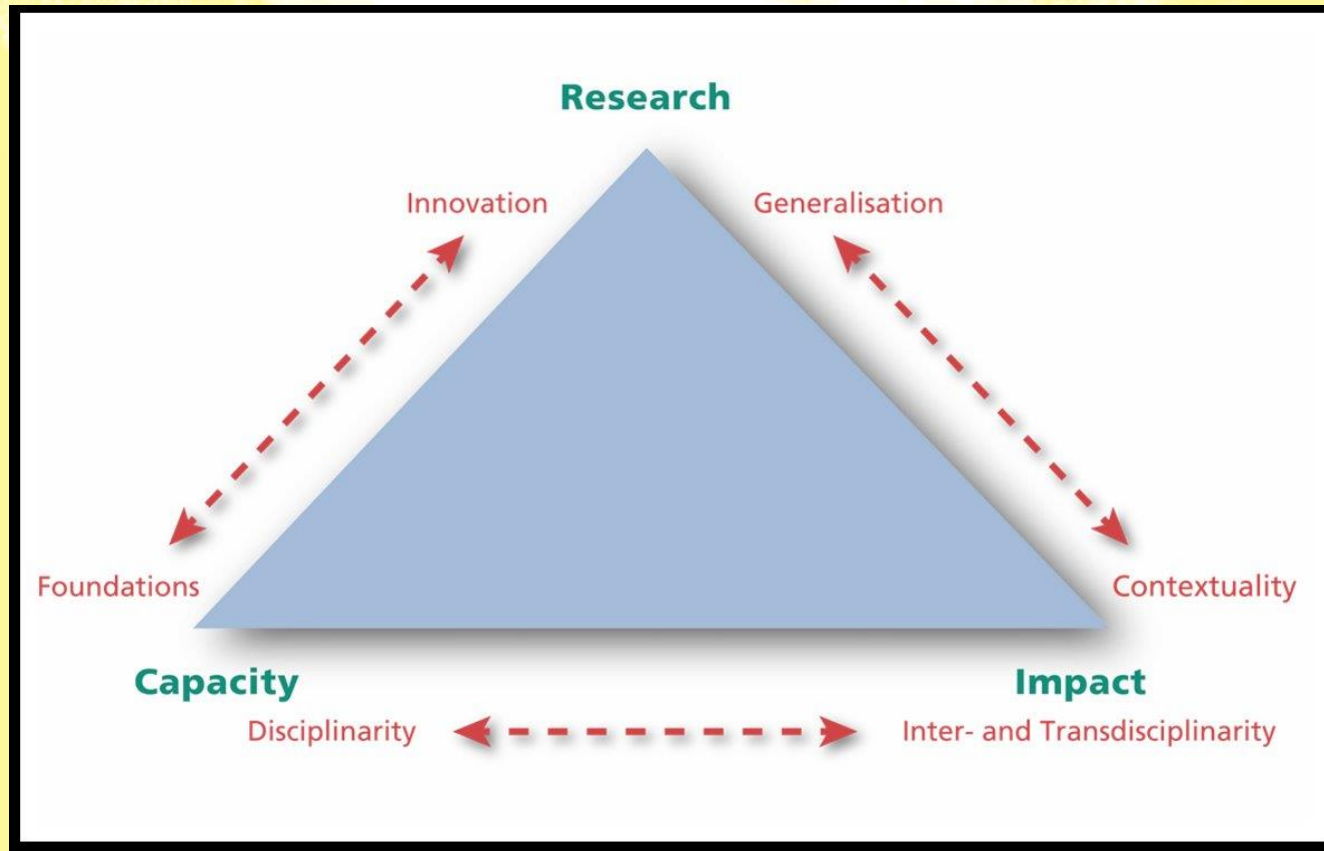
Providing adequate competences and useful insights to these critical is a crucial (but challenging) task to Research and Academic institutions worldwide

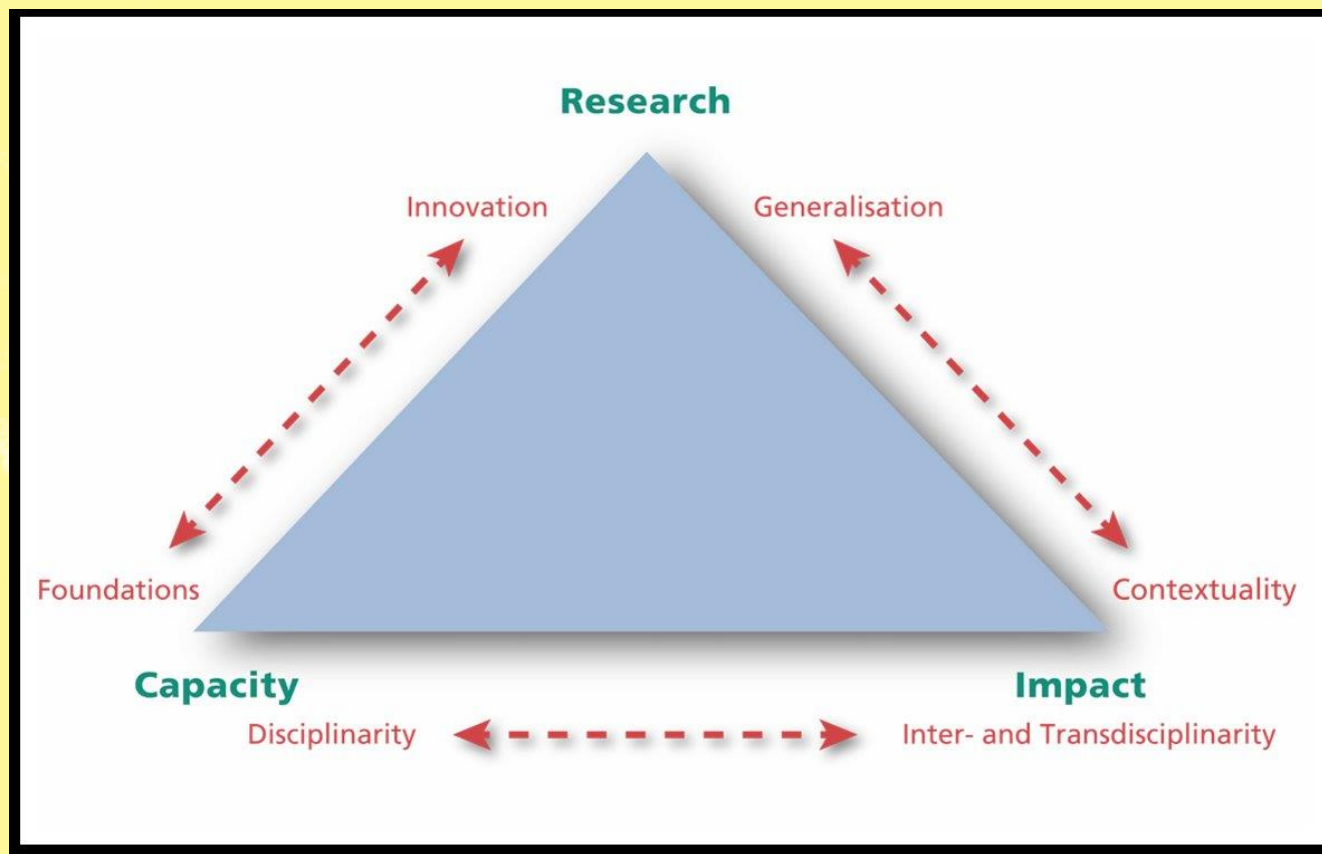
→ “..., can be achieved meaningfully only through cooperation with the research and academic institutions in the global south....“

Good strides and achievements have been made in the past two decades since the establishment of the KFPE

→ well established diverse community of education and research institutions with strong collaboration with relevant institutions

Goal orientation of Research Partnership between Global North and Global South

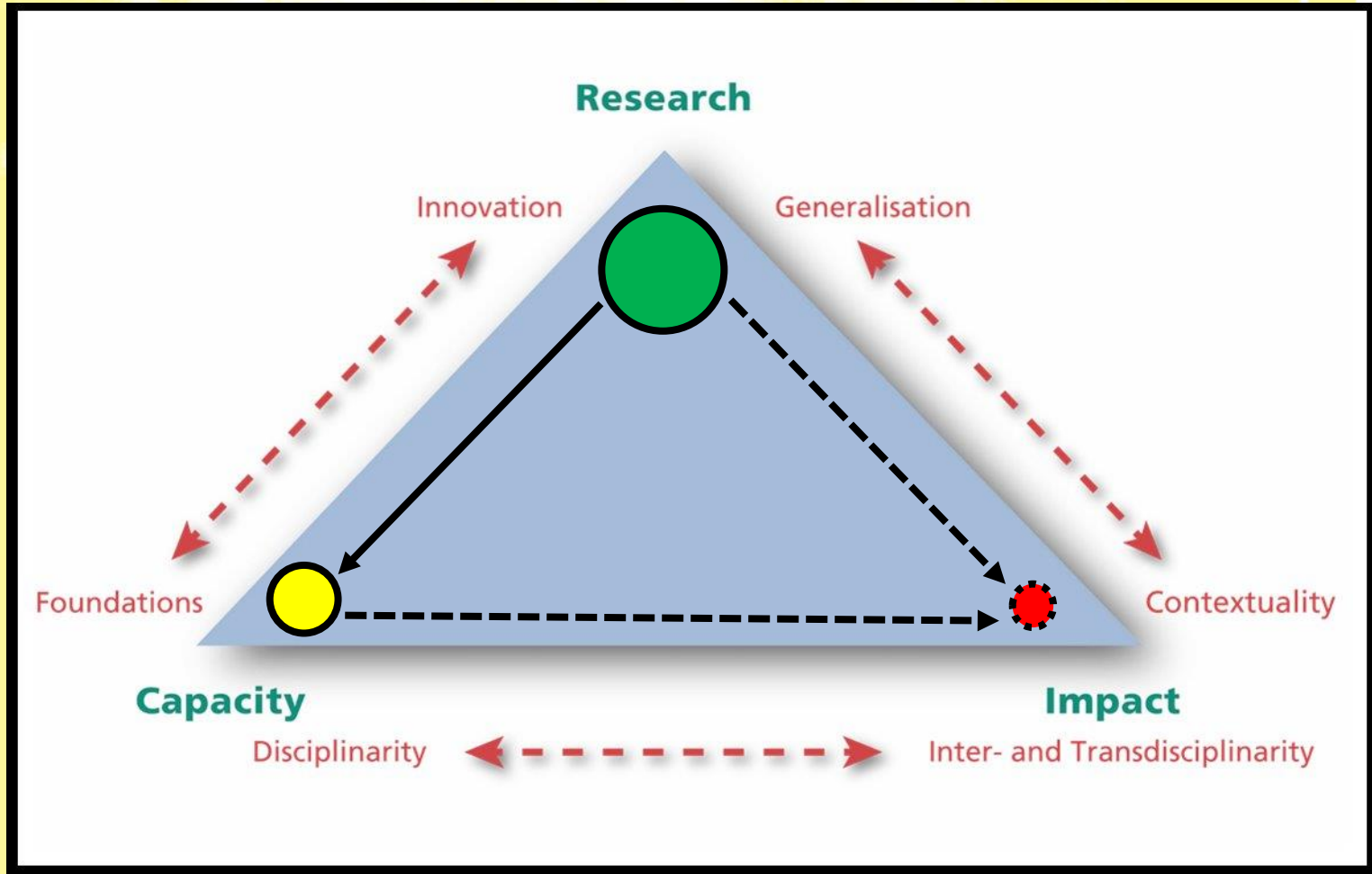


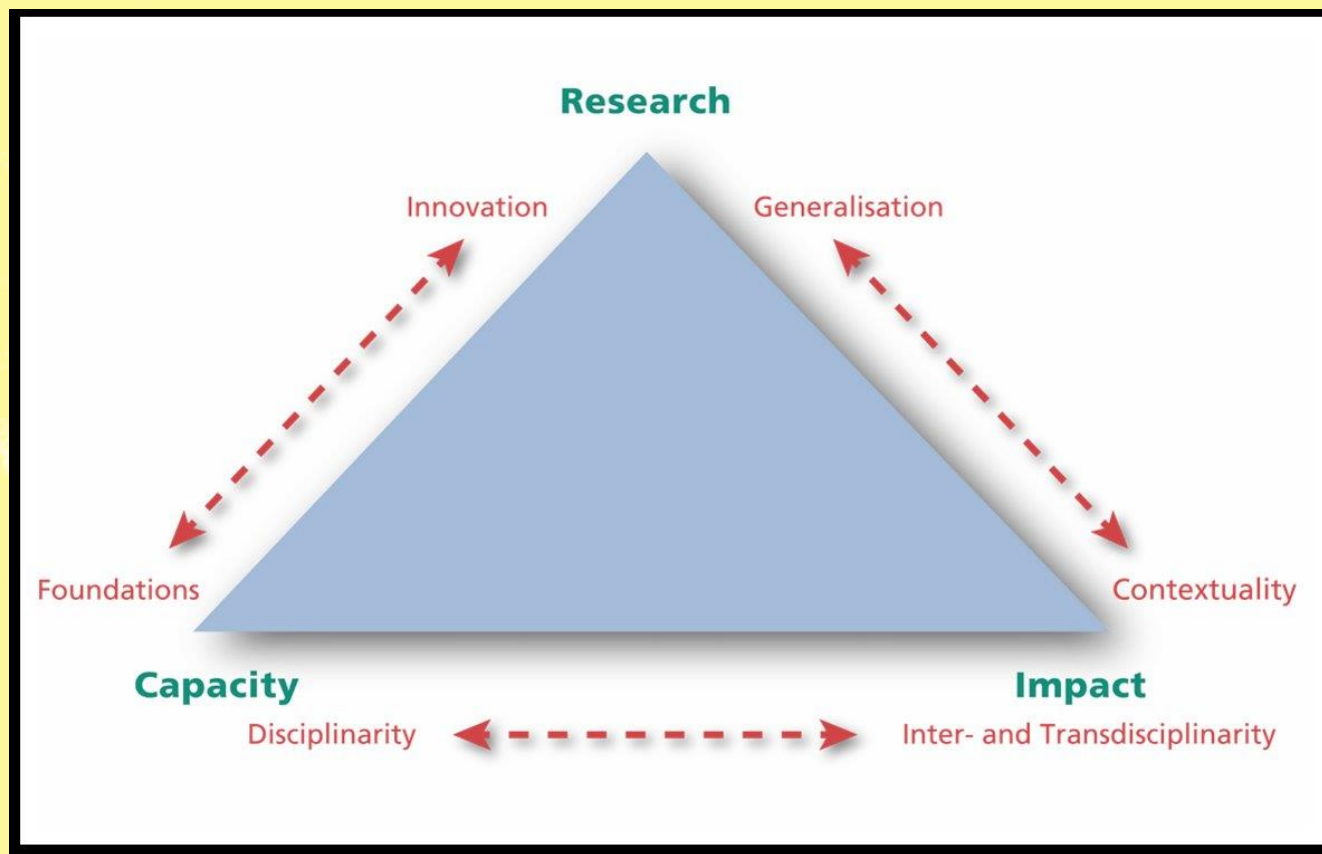


Research partnerships goals:

- i) Create knowledge through new research findings
- ii) The results should be societally relevant and have an impact
- iii) Partnership research should also contribute to the individual and institutional capacities and competences of the involved parties.

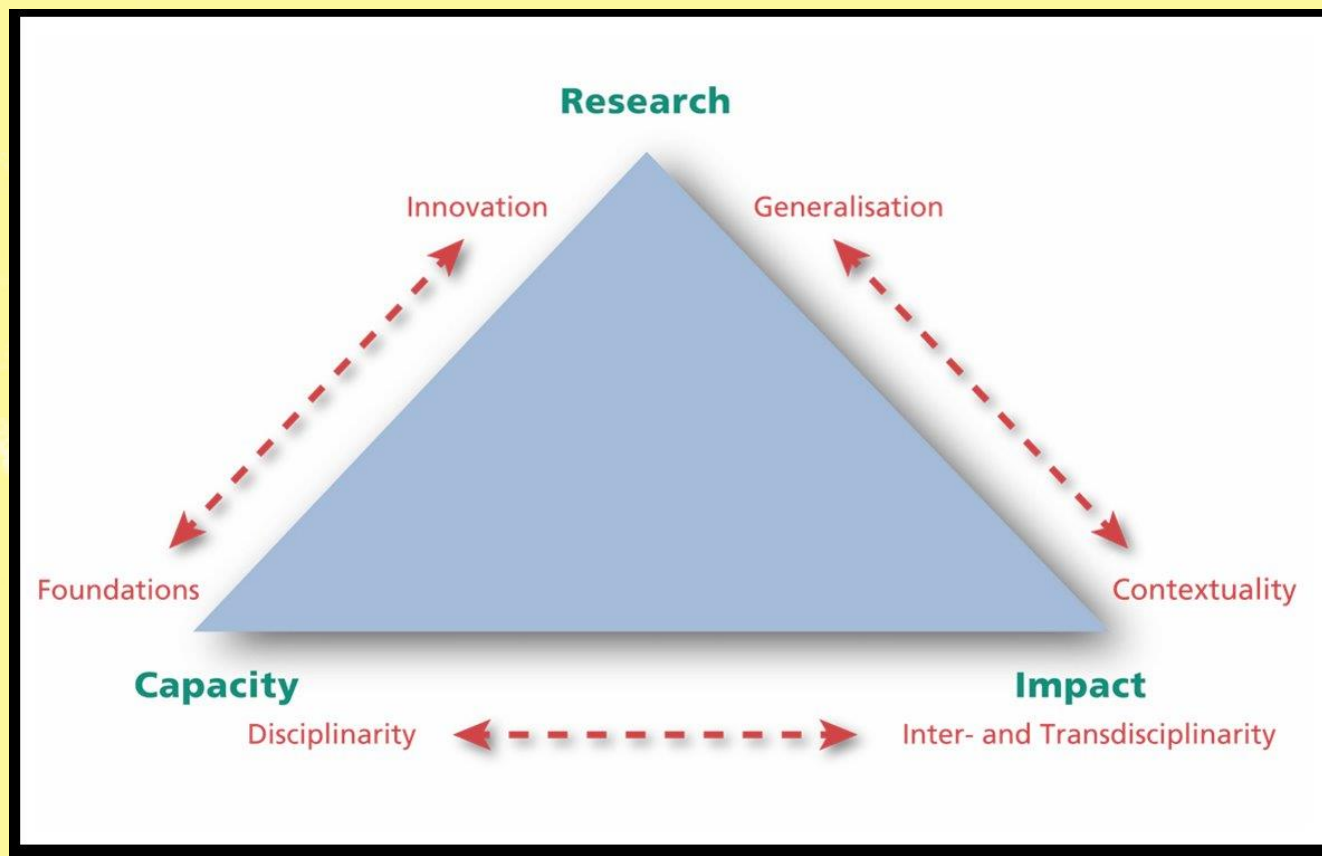
Goal orientation of Research Partnership between Global North and Global South





Conflicts between research partnership goals:

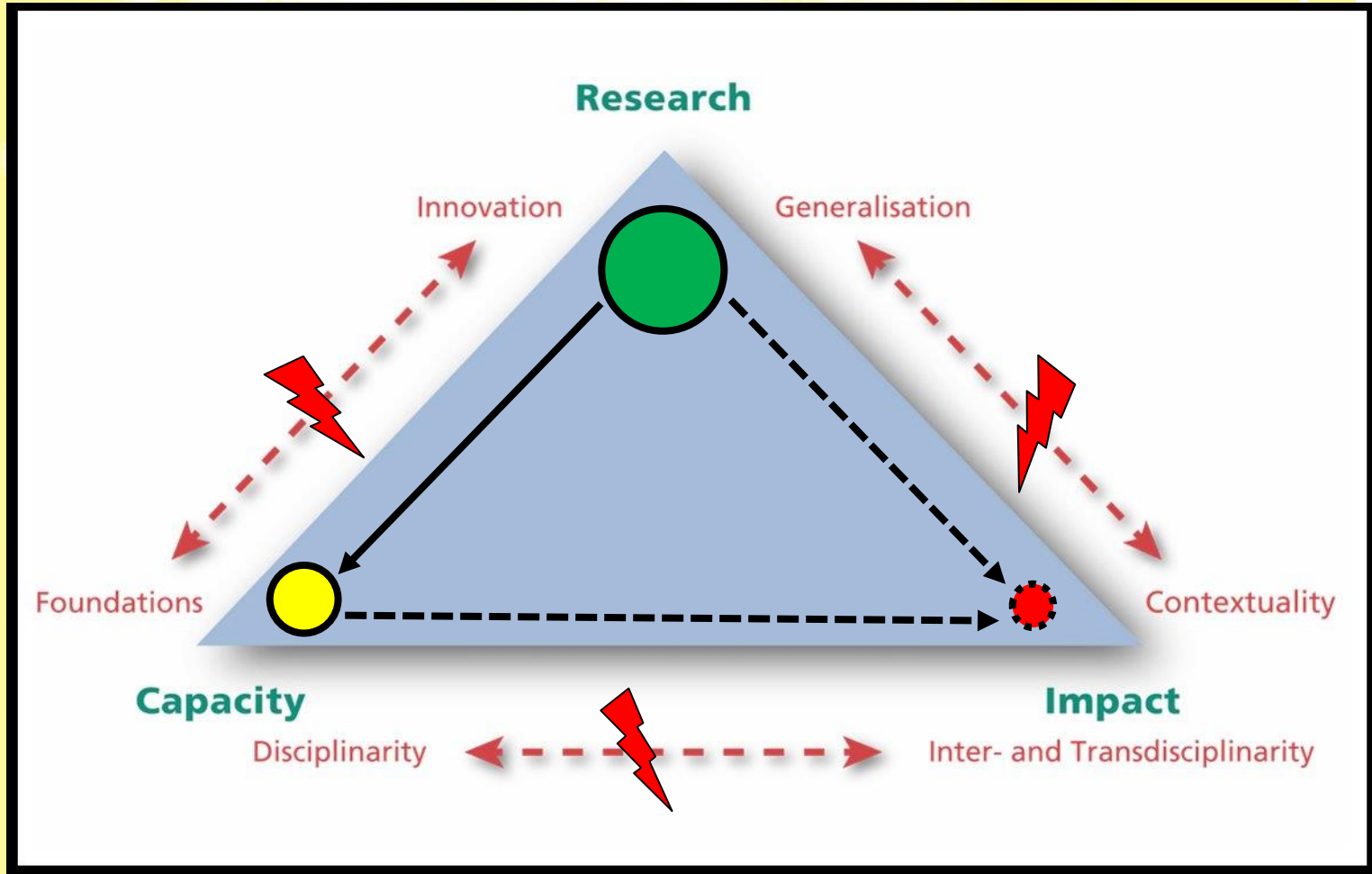
- Innovative research aspires to achieve results that can be generalised for broader application across contexts
- Capacity development tends to concentrate on consolidated knowledge and methodologies
- Societal relevance demands concretely contextualised knowledge and innovation



Conflicts between innovative research goals:

- Research and capacity development focus on understanding processes and dynamics thus tending to lean more to building systems knowledge
- Societal relevance/impact demands answers to real life problems; what can be done to solve problems and thus tending towards target and/or transformation knowledge

Goal orientation of Research Partnership between Global North and Global South



The SUDAC

Does SUDAC as presently structured provide a better framework to address these challenges in the context of the SDGs and conflicts of goal orientation in research partnerships?

The SUDAC

To fill a critical gaps:

- missing exchanges across and beyond existing networks...
- Missing synergies in the context of Global South

Prospects: untapped potential of cooperation between the Universities, Universities of Teacher Education (UTEs), and Universities of Applied Sciences (UASs)

SUDAC formed to capitalize on this potential and to address these missing links

→ address the gaps and challenges in the swiss academic community in terms of

“enhancing inclusivity and cooperation among the different swiss academic institutions and harnessing the missing synergies of swiss institutions operating in the same geographical regions in the Global South”.

The SUDAC

Through:

- i) Establishment of network of Participating Institutions*
- ii) Creation of four consortia of Education and Research*
- iii) Promotion of collaboration in selected regions in the Global South through promoting the so called Clusters of Cooperation OR the “Hubs”*

The SUDAC

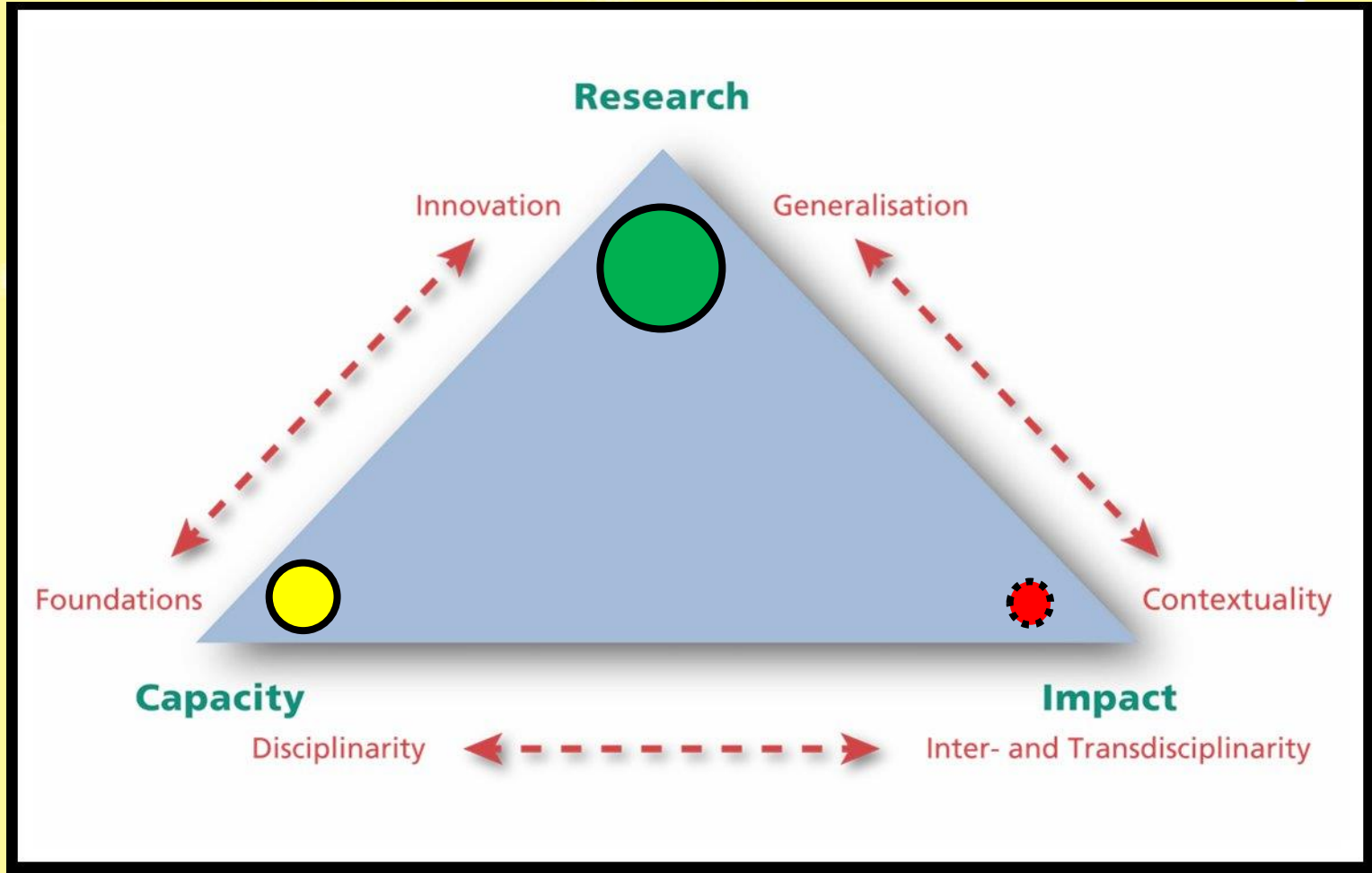
Consortia for Education and Research:

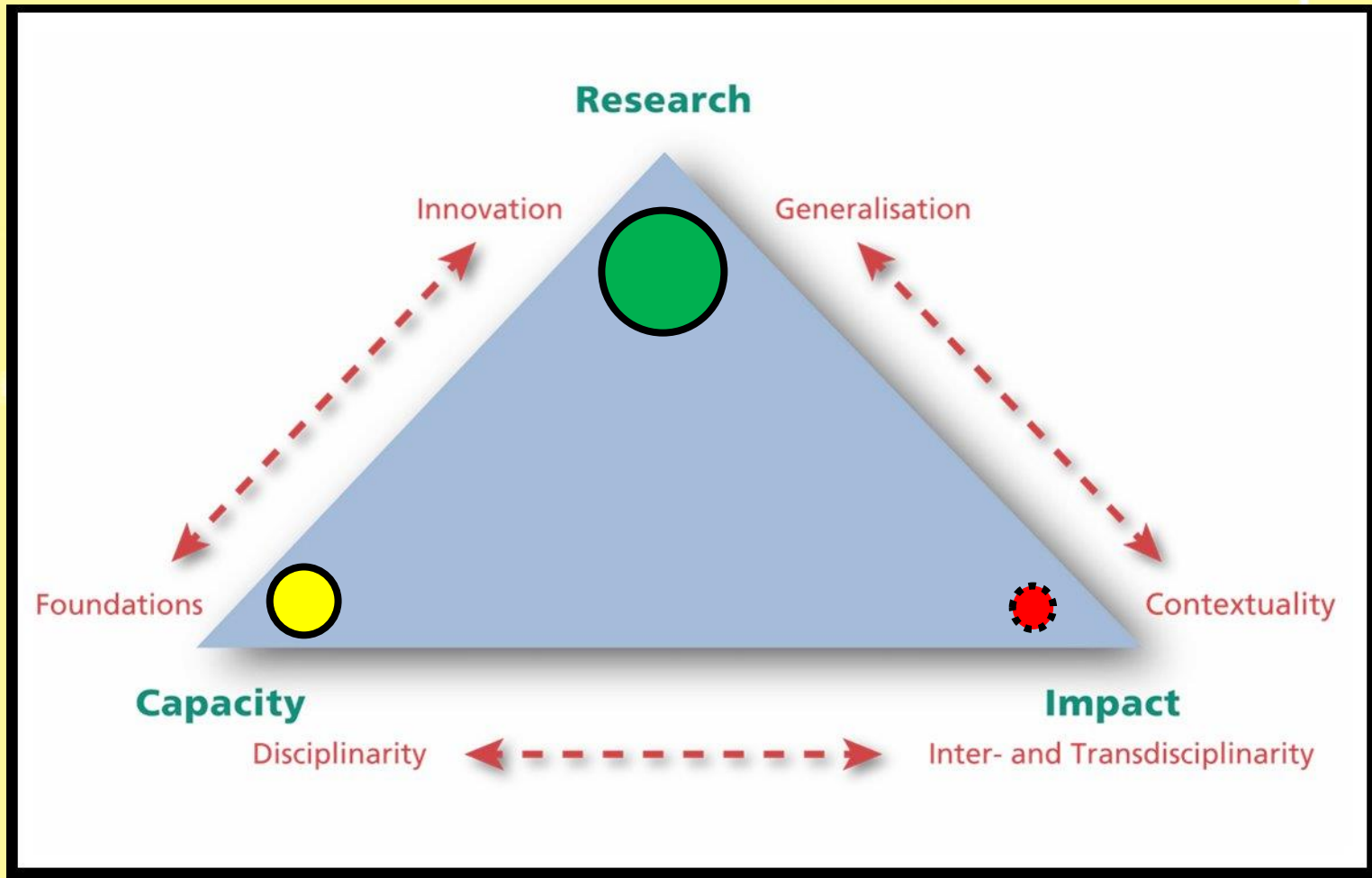
- Frameworks of cooperation in education and research around themes related to the SDGs
- Interdisciplinary in nature
- **Joint agenda setting**
- Research and education incubators
- **Joint proposal development and participation** in tenders within their respective areas of competences

The SUDAC

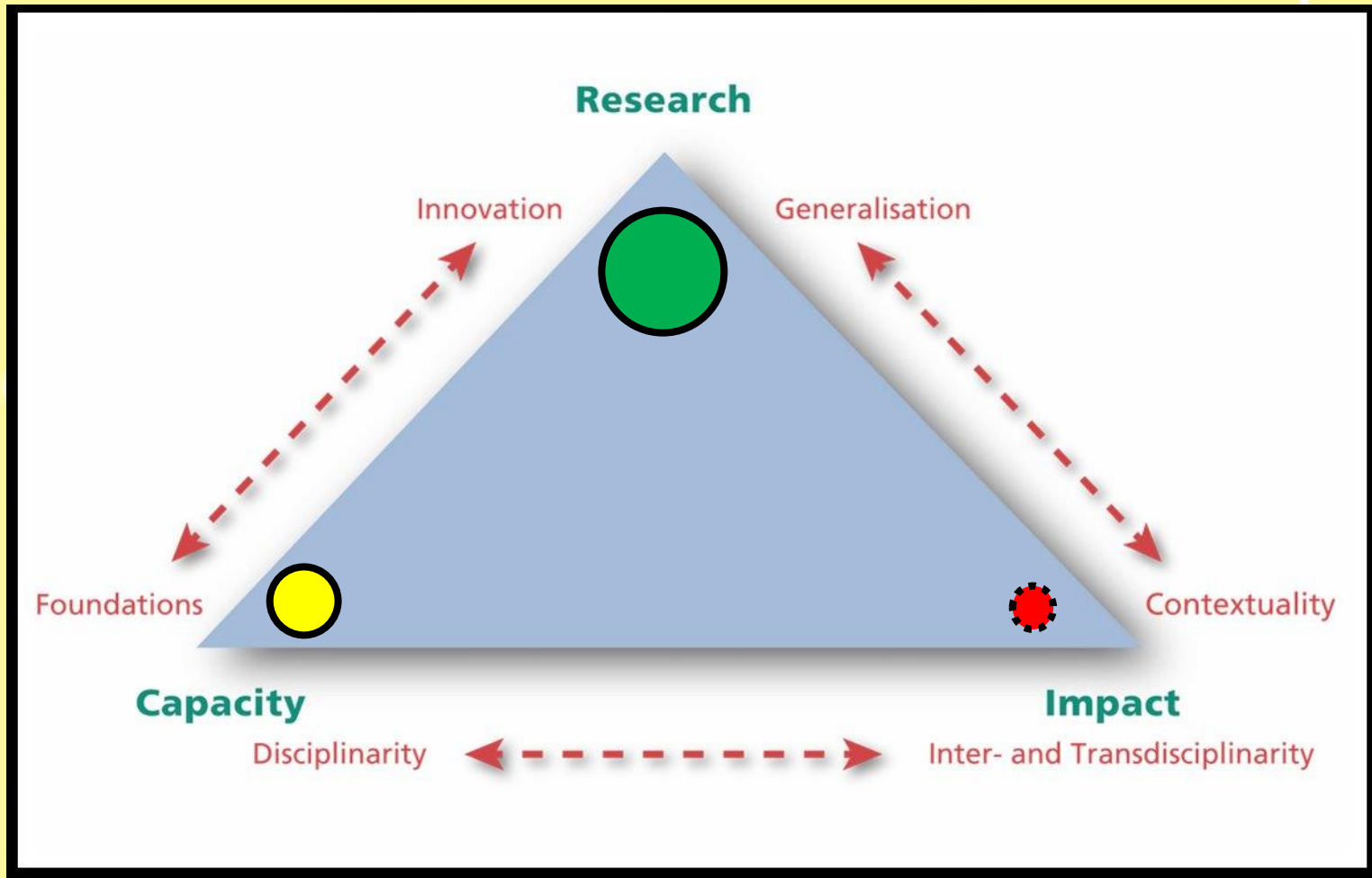
Clusters of Cooperation (CLOCs) in the Global South

- Building from possible structural spin-offs from the activities of COFER – based on existing cooperation networks or new opportunities
- Develop and facilitate activities of the COFERs in the Global South
- Capitalise and further develop existing regional knowledge platforms
 - collect, analyse, and share data, information and knowledge on the major realms as defined in the SDGs
 - Joint open access data and information platforms linking different ‘hubs’
- No funding for southern partners through SUDAC BUT support to be sought from SDC!!

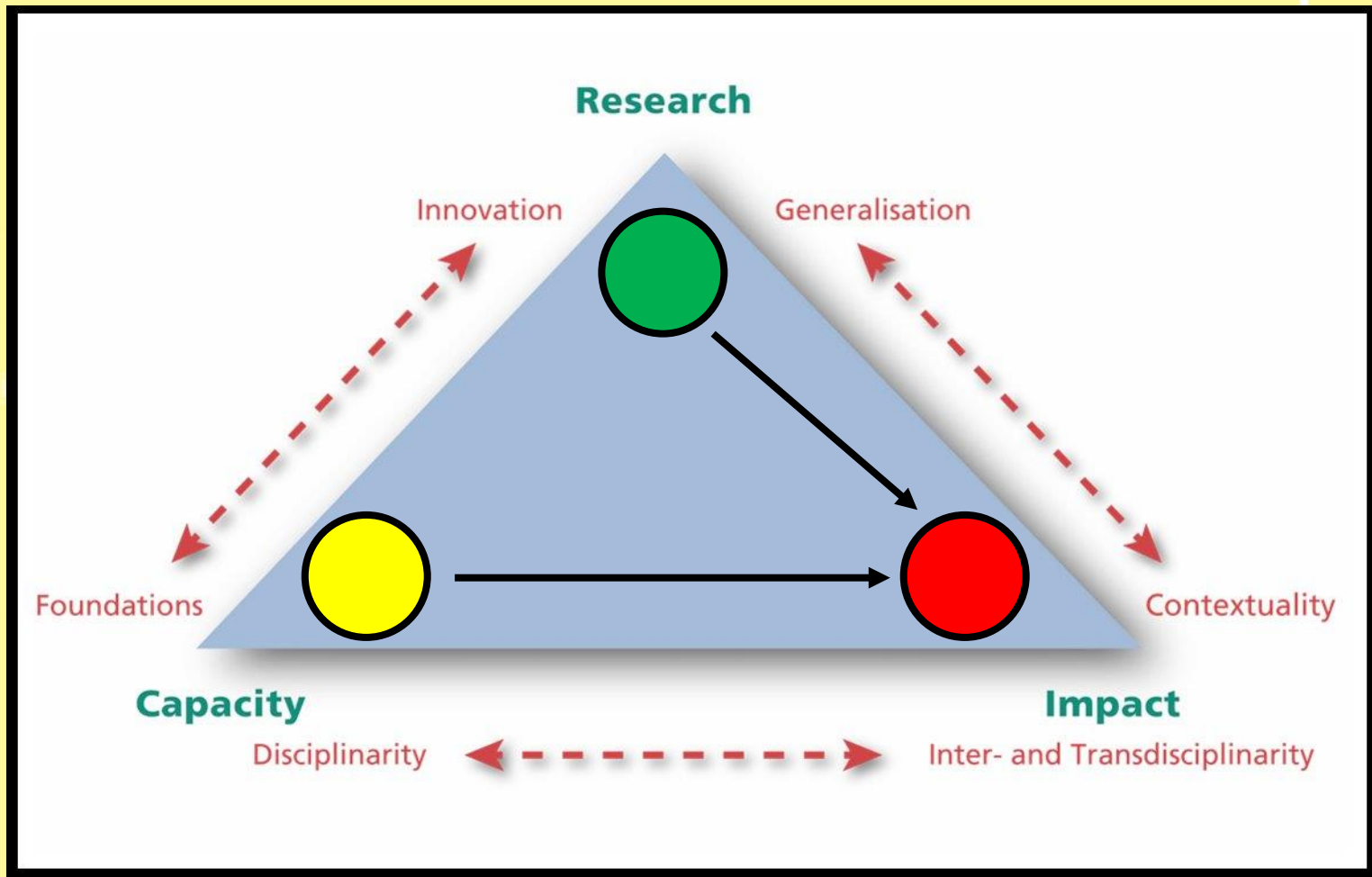




(1) “Wicked and dynamic sustainability problems are seldom captured within the boundaries and approaches of established scientific disciplines.”

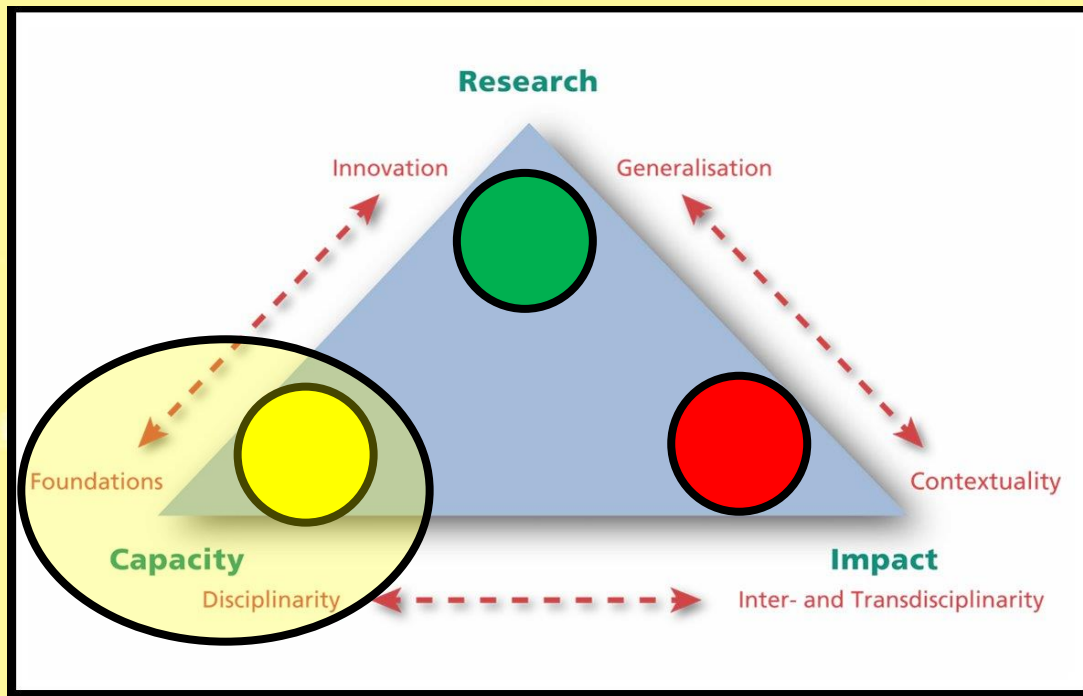


“..., Only pluralistic partnerships that operate beyond disciplines and territorial boundaries will succeed in rising to the complex challenges posed by the interdependency of SDGs and so called wicked problems....”



Calls for structural reforms in research and science for transformation:

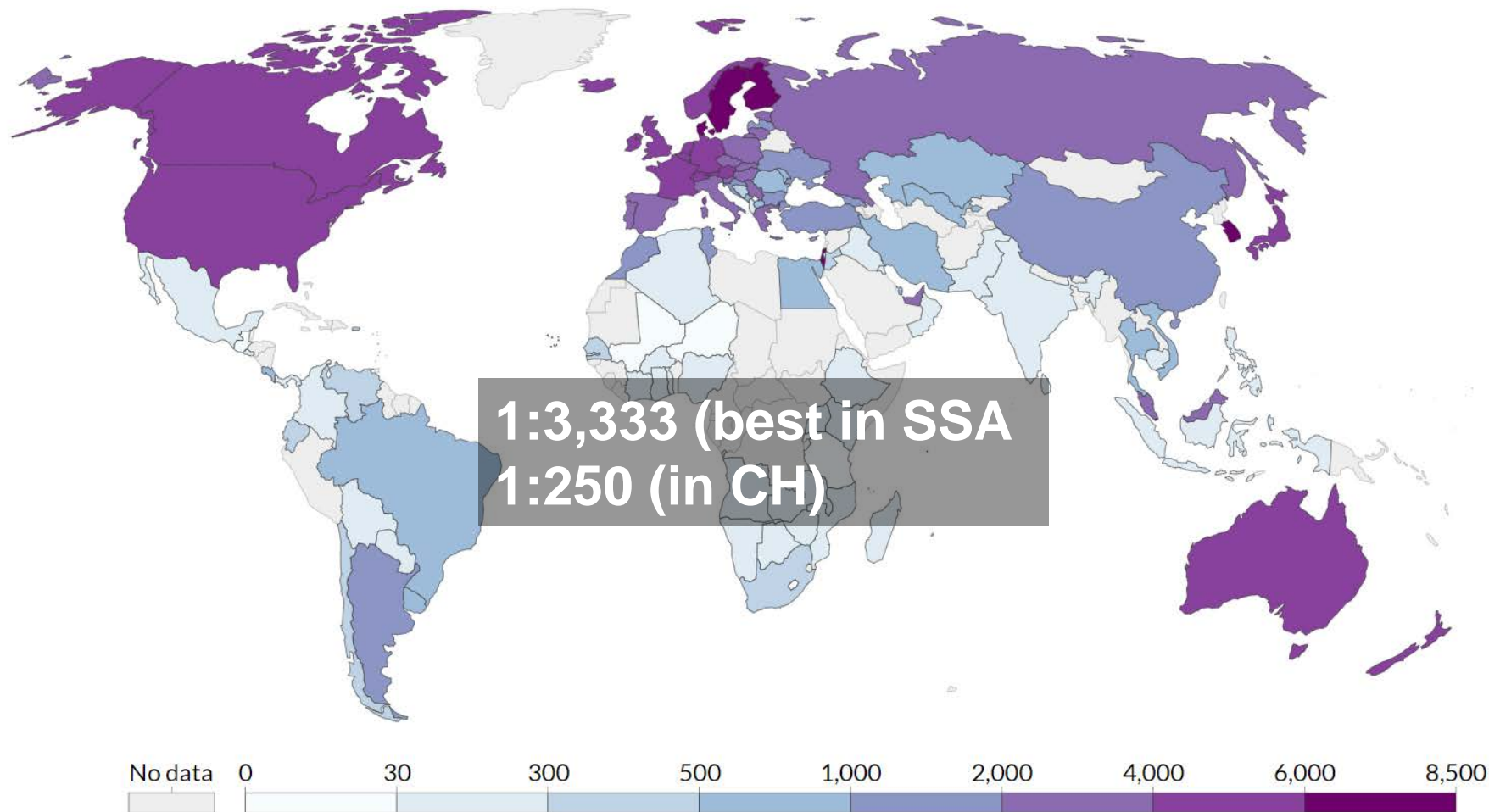
→ both Research and Capacity Development have to expand their view towards societal relevance and creating impact → move closer to Impact, BUT without losing their basic disciplinary foundations

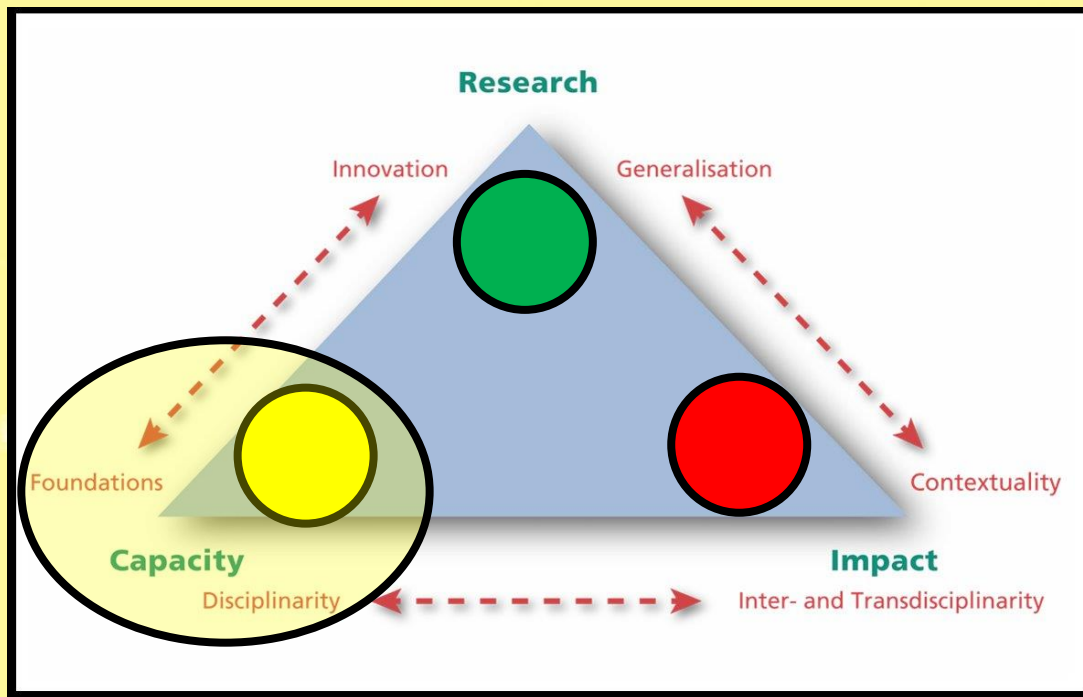


Capacity Development here is key for the Global South partner institutions:

Researchers in R&D per million people, 2015

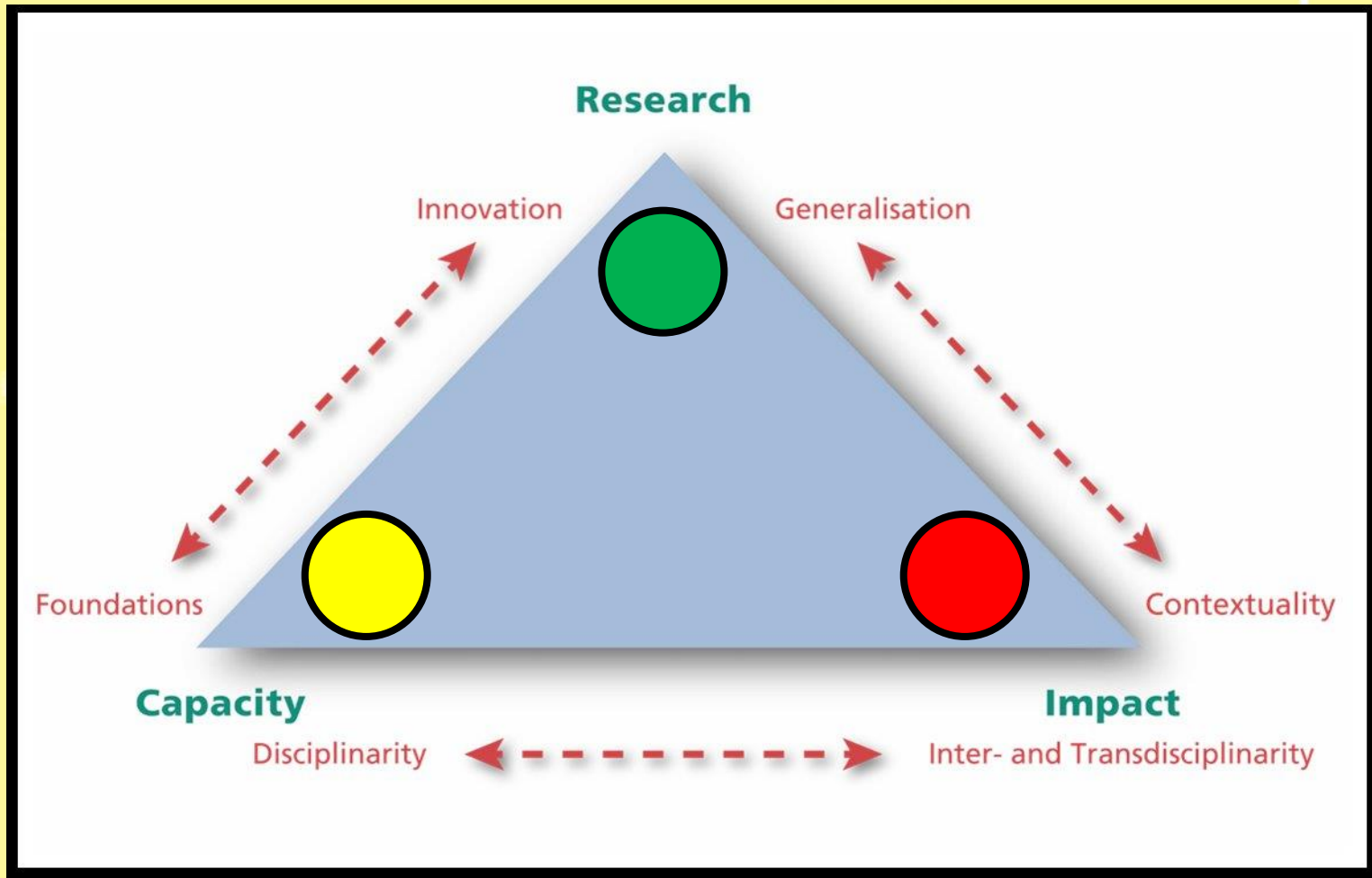
Researchers in Research & Development (R&D) are professionals engaged in the conception or creation of new knowledge, products, processes, methods, or systems and in the management of the projects concerned. Postgraduate PhD students engaged in R&D are included.



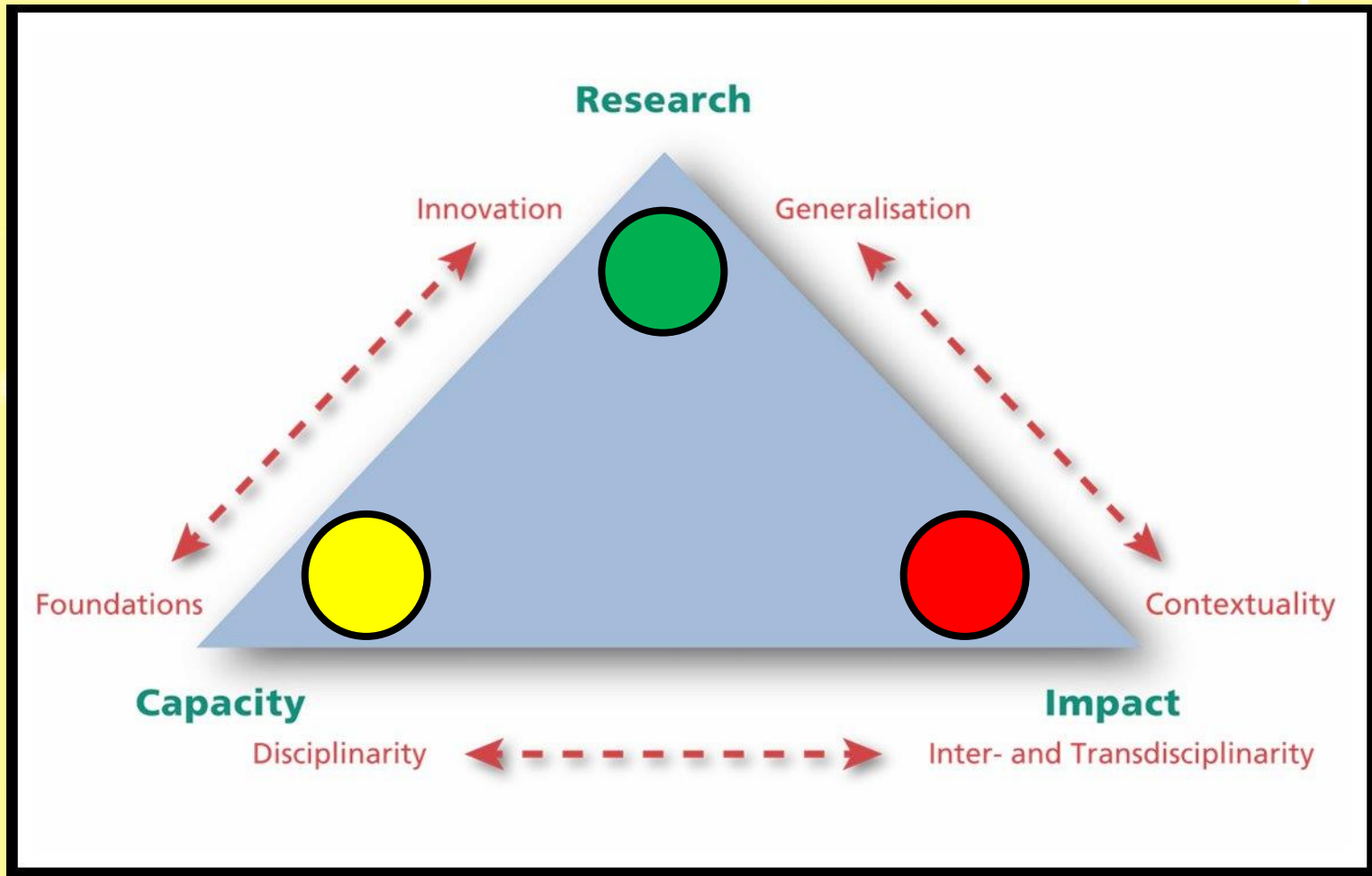


Capacity Development here is key for the Global South partner institutions:

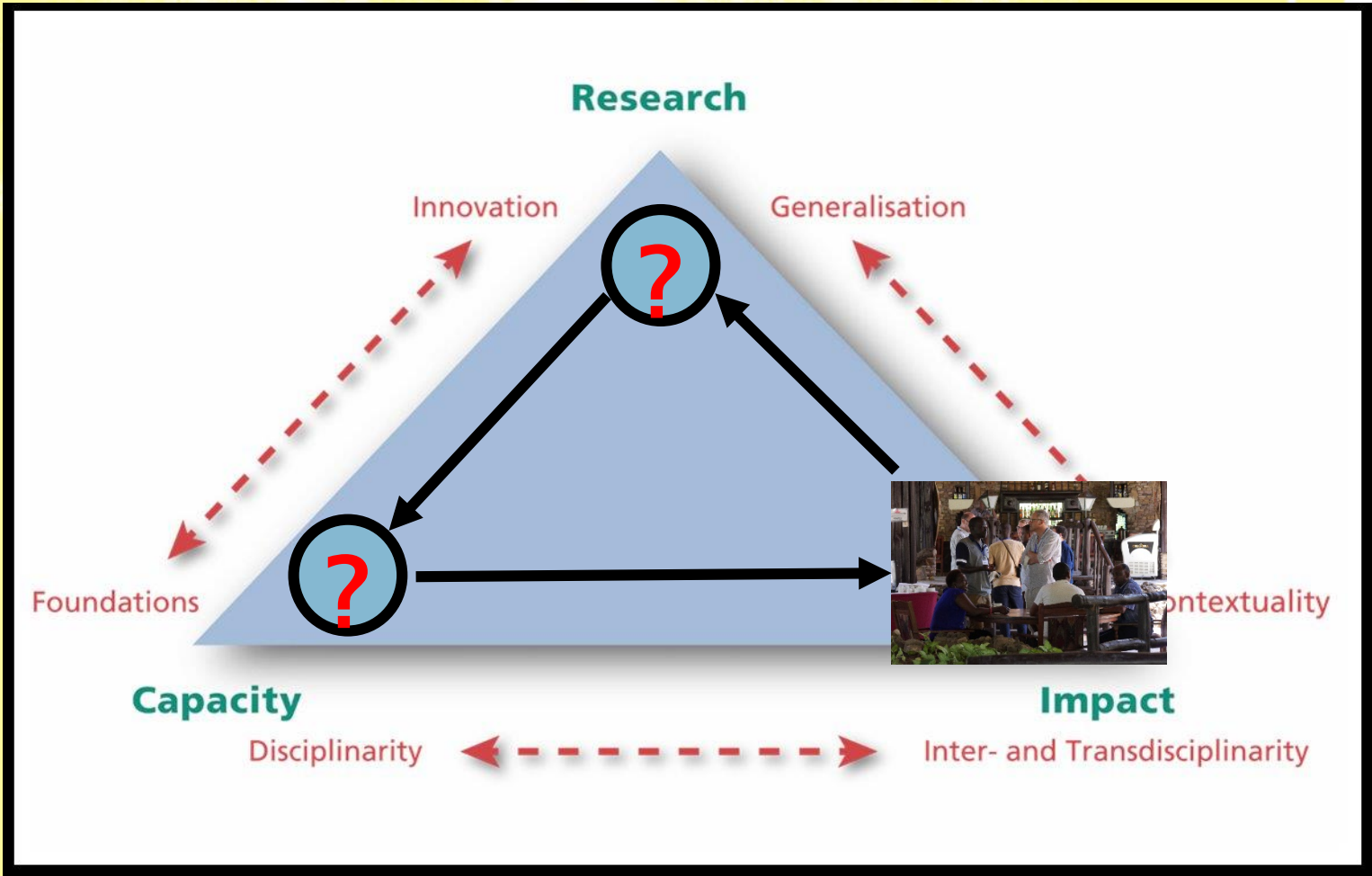
- *Capacity based on disciplinary foundations will alone not contribute to enhancing impact*
- *CD is more than just building capacity for research scientists and scholars → more than 80% of those capacity built become practitioners and occupy high positions at policy and decision making levels*

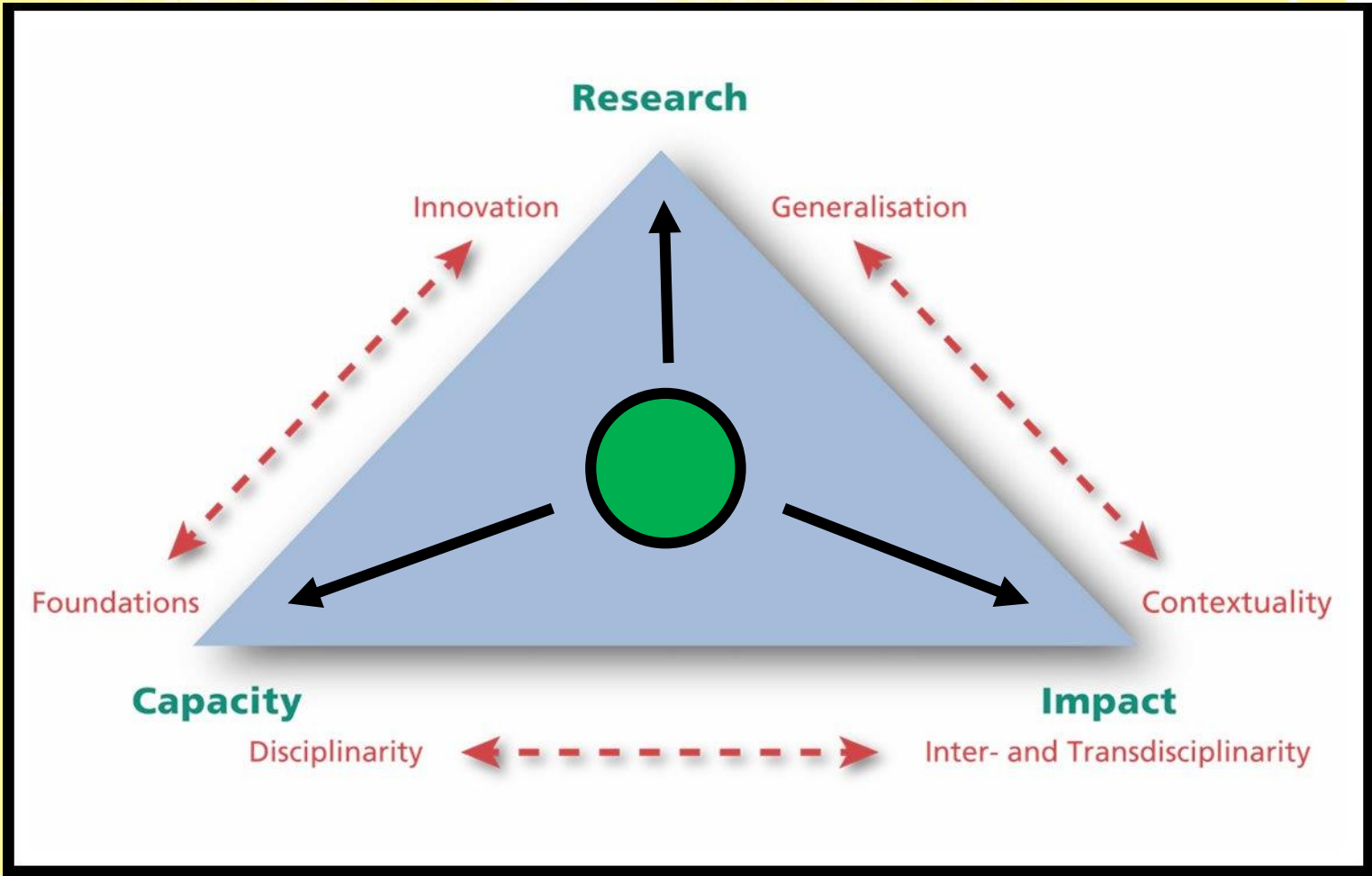


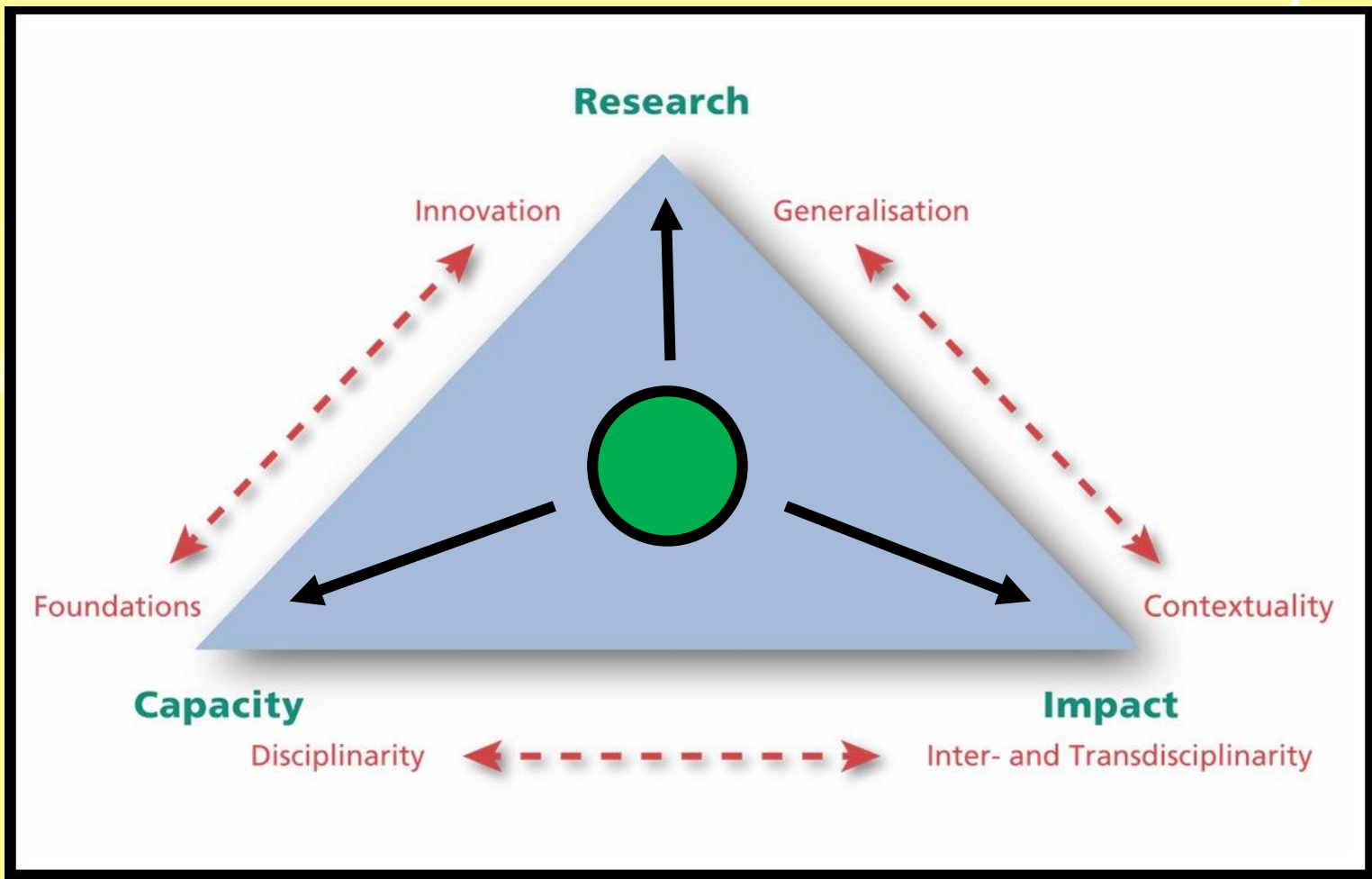
(2) “..., Only pluralistic partnerships that promote genuine joint research agenda setting shall contribute meaningfully to designing transformative pathways relevant to the local contexts....”



Calls for commitment to reform agenda setting practice and funding arrangements towards institutions in the Global South

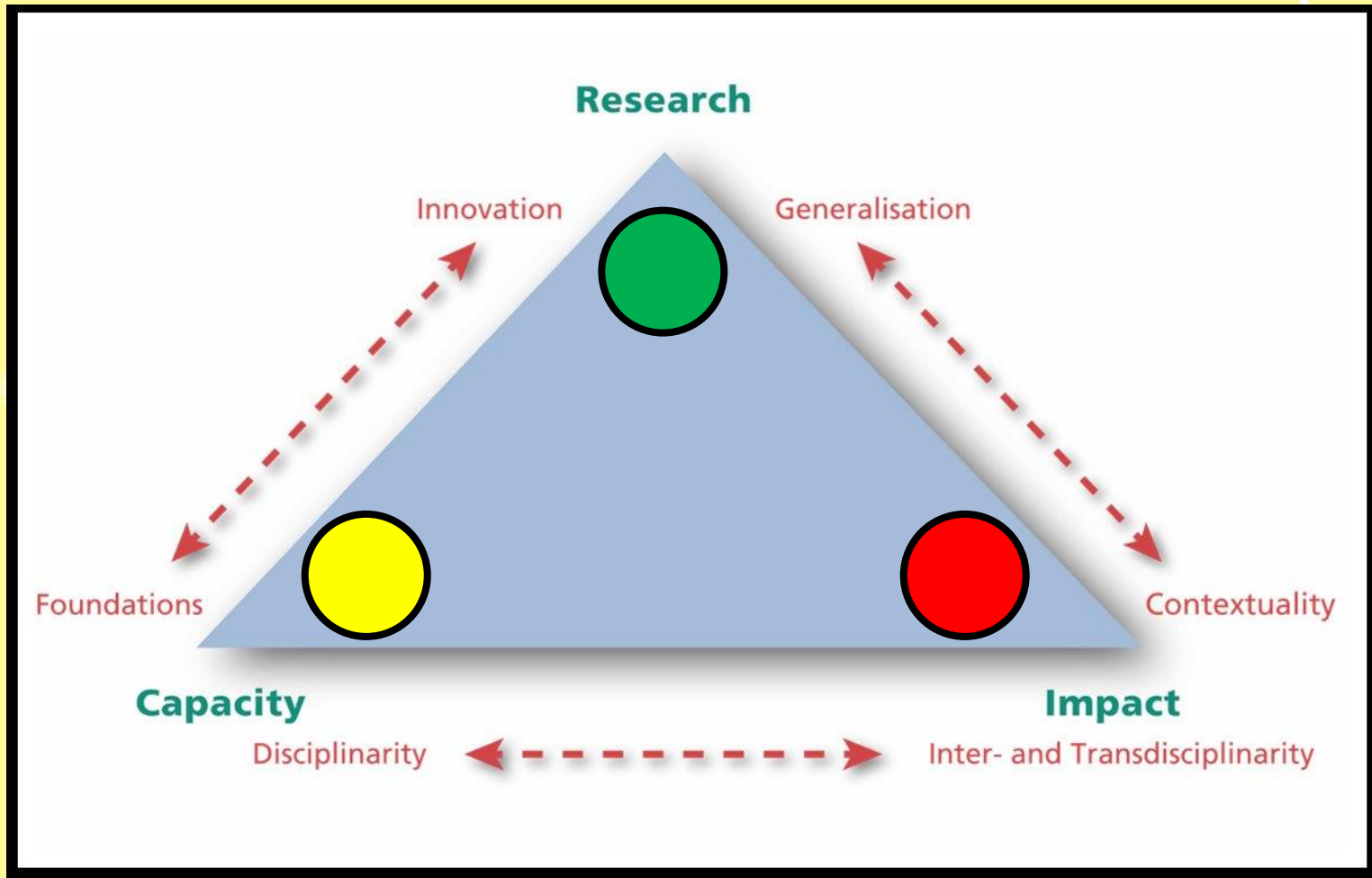




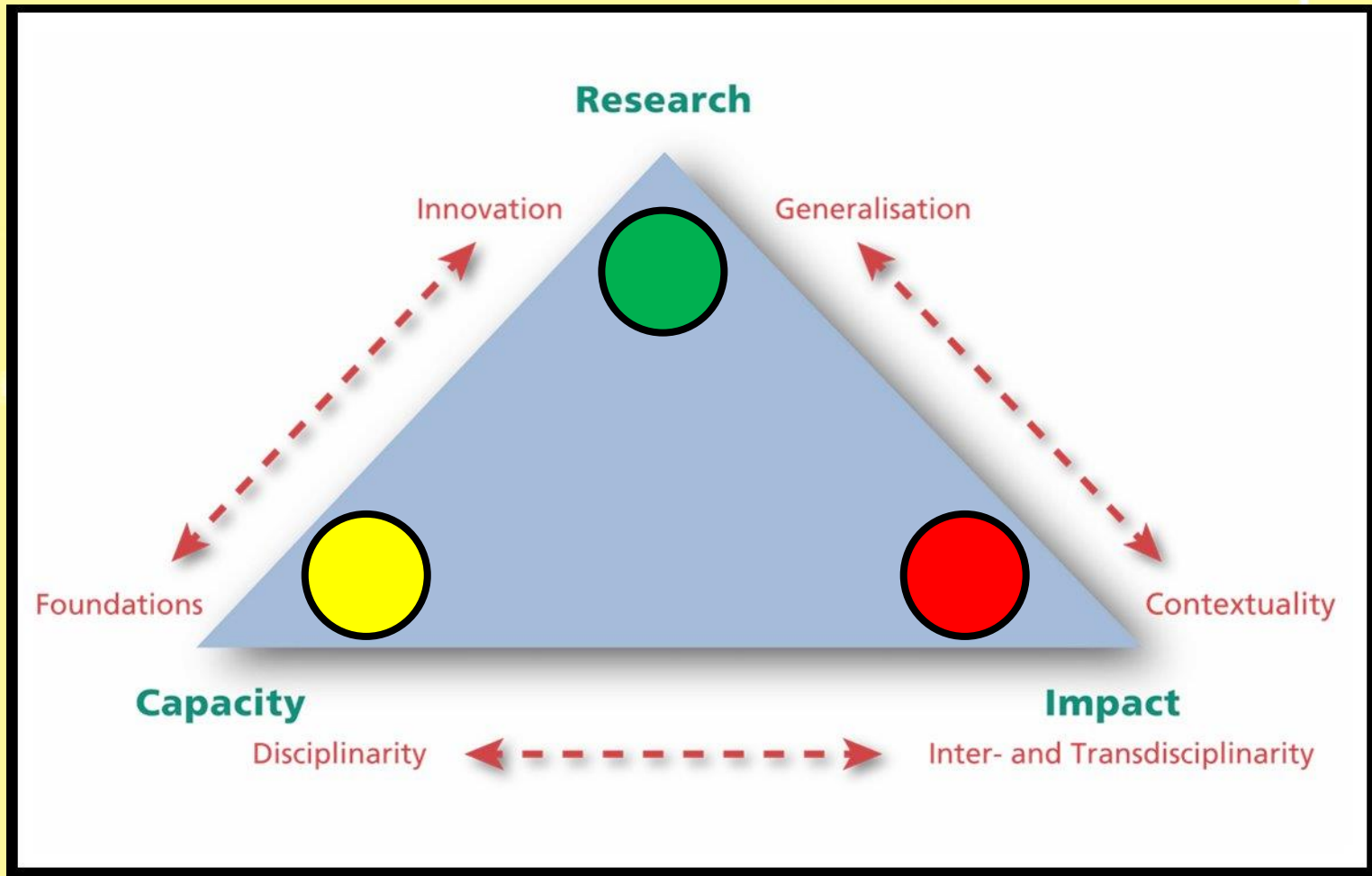


Funding??

→ No funding for southern partners through SUDAC BUT support to be sought from SDC!!



(3) There is also need to pay attention to and develop effective strategies and approaches to deal with other causes of asymmetries between institutions in the Global North and Global South



E.g: Access to data and information

→ Lack of context specific data and information in the Global South

→ Poor research governance and infrastructure

→ Technological divide

Leveraging research partnerships to achieve the *2030 Agenda*. Experiences from North-South cooperation

GAIA 28/2 (2019): 143 – 150

BOX 2: Key recommendations to advance the *2030 Agenda* by means of research partnerships

The following recommendations were derived from a survey of the leaders of research institutions, a review of the life science and biomedical research literature and the synthesis of the main conclusions drawn during recent initiatives, meetings and research related to research partnerships and the *2030 Agenda*.

Evolve the concept of partnerships by:

- 1.** Implementing good partnership practice.
- 2.** Creating more empirical evidence on the effectiveness of a type of collaboration vs. project.
- 3.** Research and innovation to enhance partnership framework and performance.

Move towards transformative research by:

4. Designing research that is solution-oriented.
5. Re-evaluating the current research assessment and reward systems.
6. As a funder, demanding a proof of good partnership practice when assessing research.
7. As a funder, adapting their assessment procedures.
8. As a funder, supporting partnership matching.

Adapt to a new level of collaborating within the sustainable development community by:

9. Investing more into transdisciplinary, transnational and transformative research.
10. Engaging the civil society as equal partner.
11. Engaging in multisector partnerships.
12. Including relevant stakeholders from the beginning.
13. As an academic/research institution, adapting their governance system and curricula.
14. Complementing and synthesizing existing knowledge.



Thank you

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