Leaders' Influence in Evaluation Capacity Building:
A Framework and Strategies for Cultivating Commitment and Action

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Leaders' Influence in Evaluation Capacity Building: A Practice Framework and Theory of Change

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CENTER FOR EVALUATION INNOVATION

We need to be more explicit and strategic in developing leaders and leveraging leadership to make ECB stick.

I created the ECB Leadership Framework to help us develop explicit strategies for leaders.

Factor in organizational and environmental context.

Plan for how foundation leaders (evaluation, program, C-suite, board) can incentivize attention to ECB.

Build capacity of foundation leaders to commit to and shape ECB and cultivate followership.

Monitor, evaluate, and learn about the influence of leaders on our efforts.

I used literature from multiple disciplines and mixed-methods to develop, explore, and test the ECB Leadership Framework.

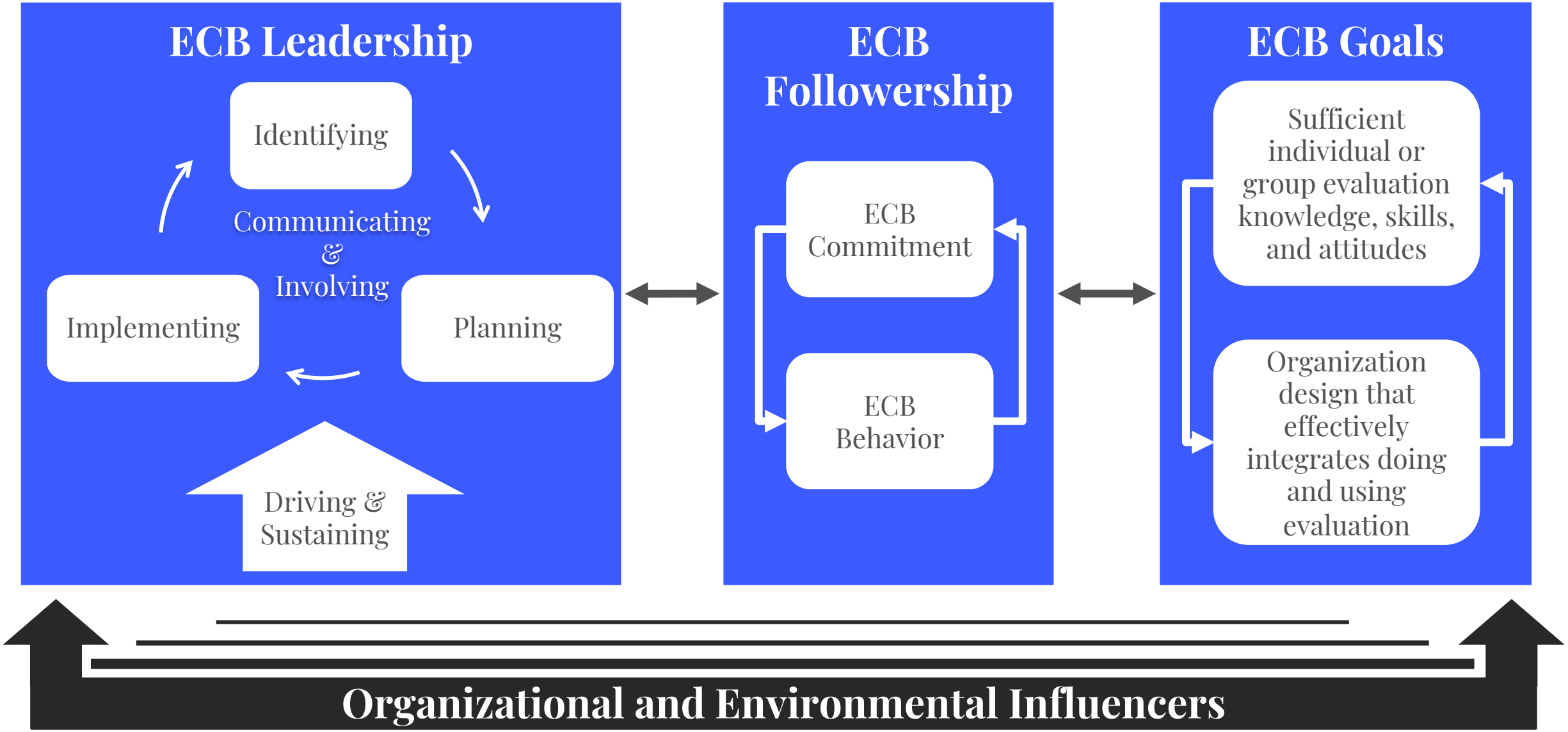
Literature Review → **Study 1** → **Study 2**

Reviewed the **leadership literatures** in ECB, organizational learning, and organizational change

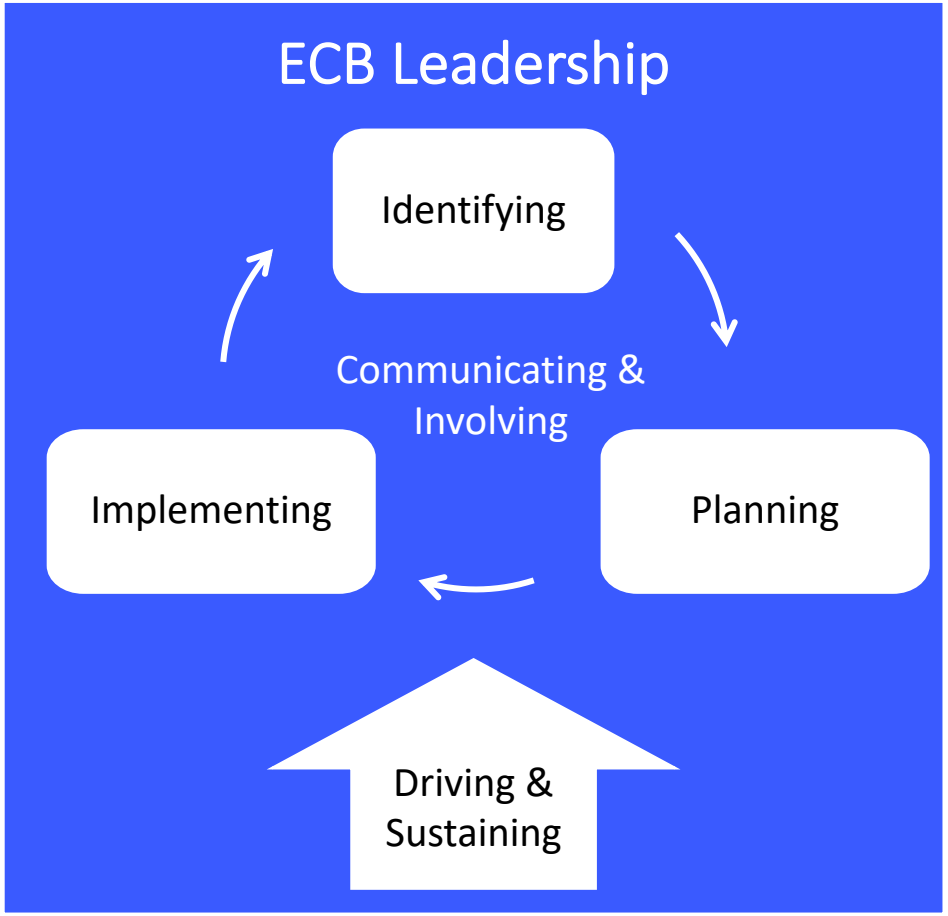
Interviews with 13 foundation evaluation leaders who do ECB and expert ECB consultants

Survey of 167 American Evaluation Association (AEA) members who do ECB

The ECB Leadership Framework

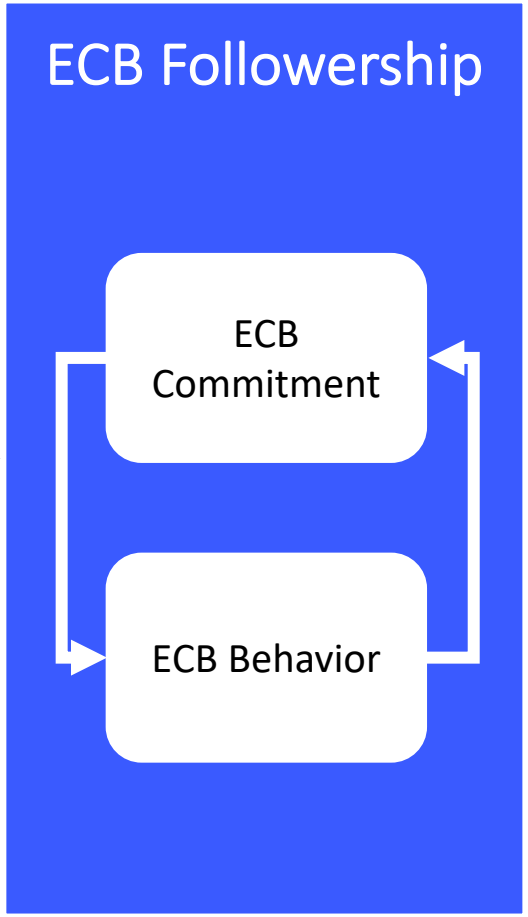


The ECB Leadership Framework



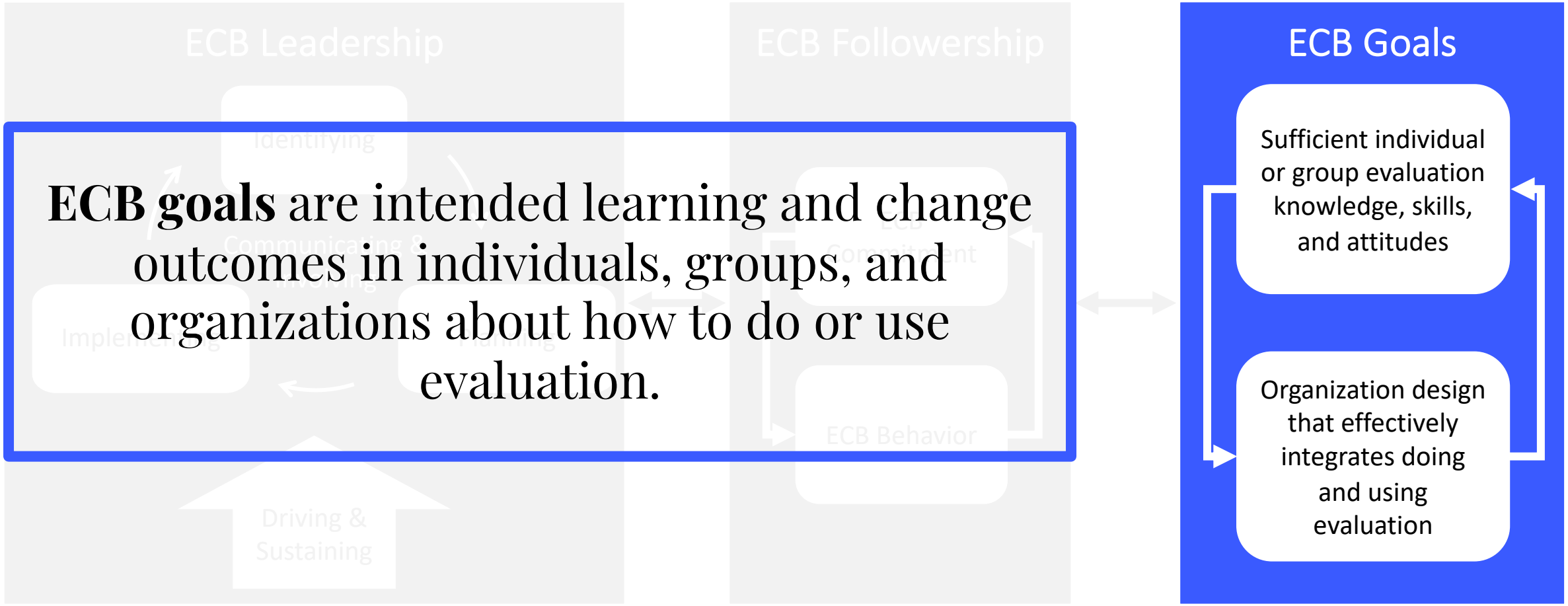
ECB leadership is the process of facilitating organizational change and learning in evaluation capacity as well as influencing others to build and sustain the organization's ability to do or use evaluation.

The ECB Leadership Framework



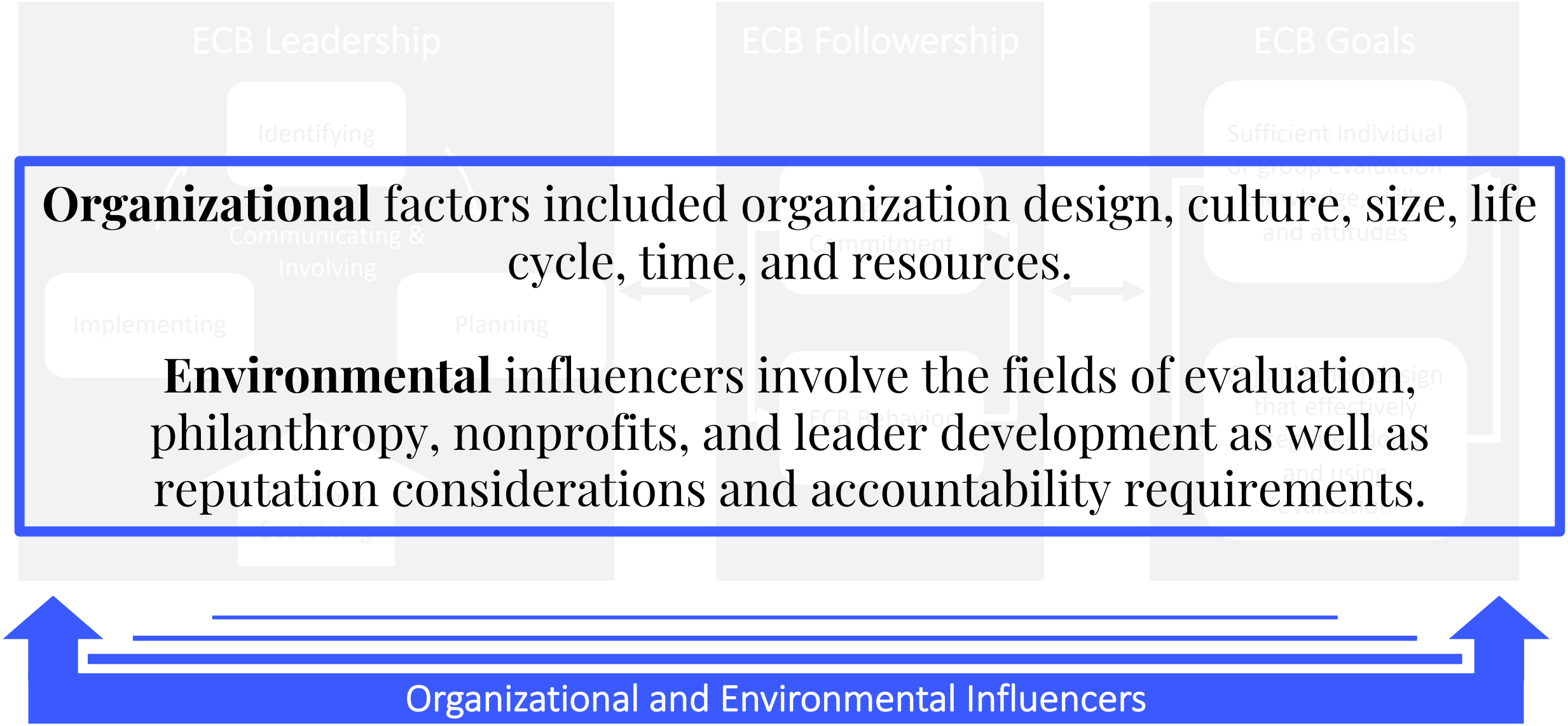
ECB followership is people's desires to support and their actions in ECB that occurs from interacting with leaders.

The ECB Leadership Framework



ECB goals are intended learning and change outcomes in individuals, groups, and organizations about how to do or use evaluation.

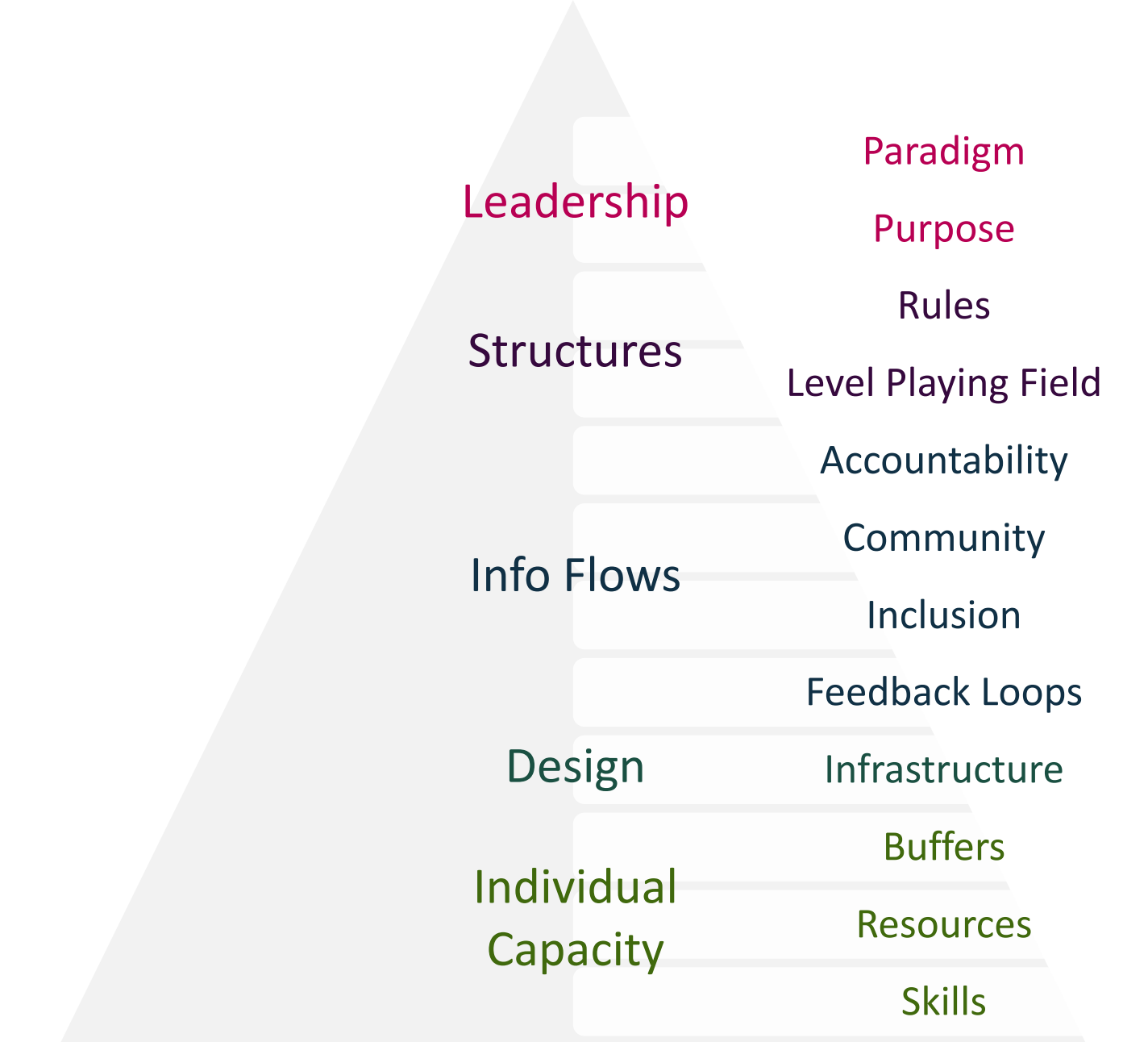
The ECB Leadership Framework



Organizational factors included organization design, culture, size, life cycle, time, and resources.

Environmental influencers involve the fields of evaluation, philanthropy, nonprofits, and leader development as well as reputation considerations and accountability requirements.

We need to use higher leverage points like leadership to get philanthropy to learn how to do and use evaluation.



*This model was produced in the article "What will it take for philanthropy to learn," which adapts Donella Meadows' systems change work.

Building Evaluation Capacity at the Kauffman Foundation amid Organizational Transition

Matthew Carr, Director of Evaluation

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Education
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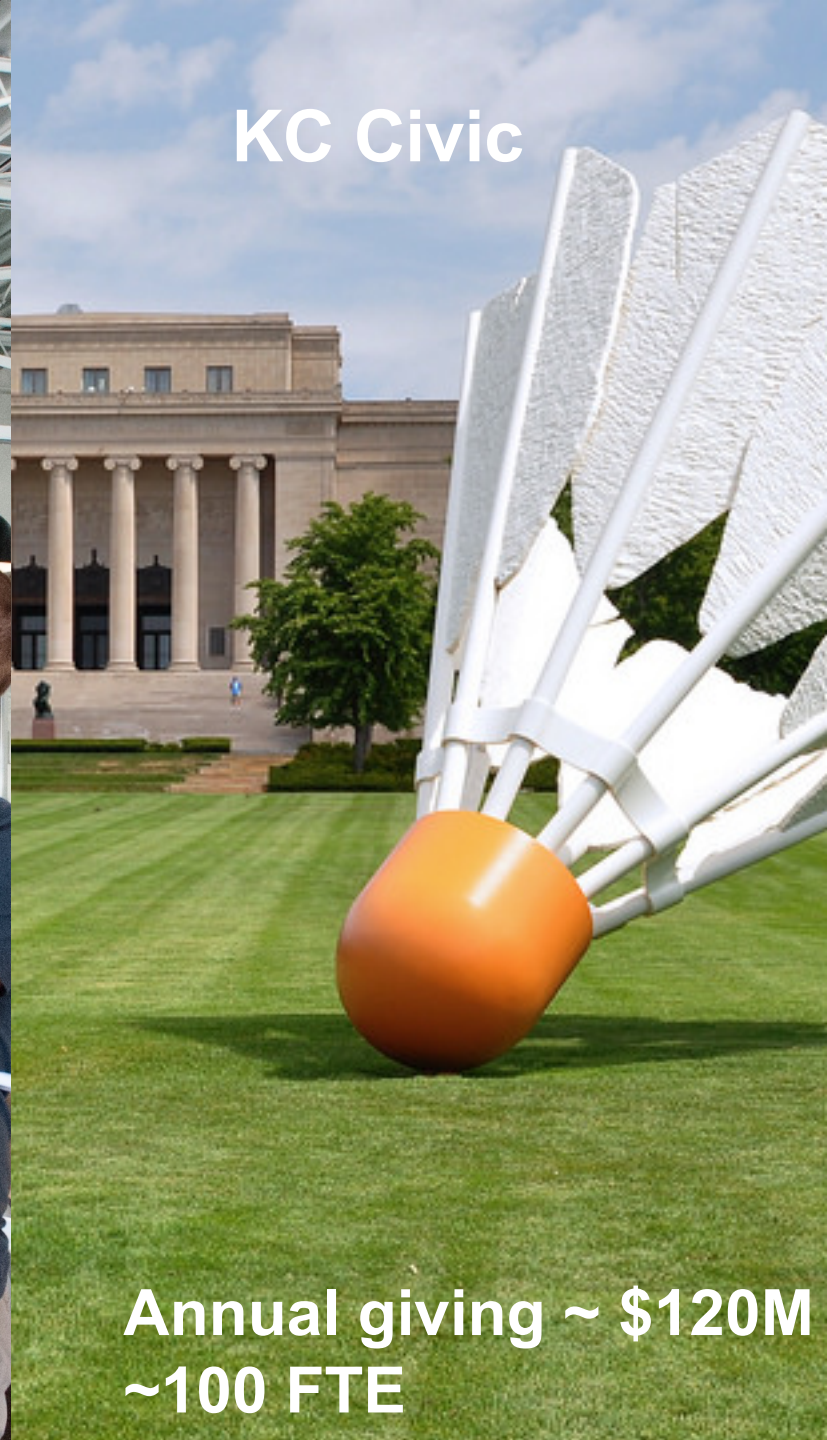
Entrepreneurship


KC Civic
Annual giving ~ $120M
~100 FTE

The evaluation department was created in spring 2015

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In the beginning

1. Clarify the purpose and role of evaluation with staff –
   Focus on learning vs accountability; support orientation

2. Align vision of the department with CEO

3. Build relationships with senior leadership team

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In the beginning, part 2

1. With program areas – go deeper on strategic plans
   Theory of change and logic model diagrams

2. Develop initial set of strategy indicators and dashboards

3. Build grant-level measurement into new grants management system

4. Provide training to staff

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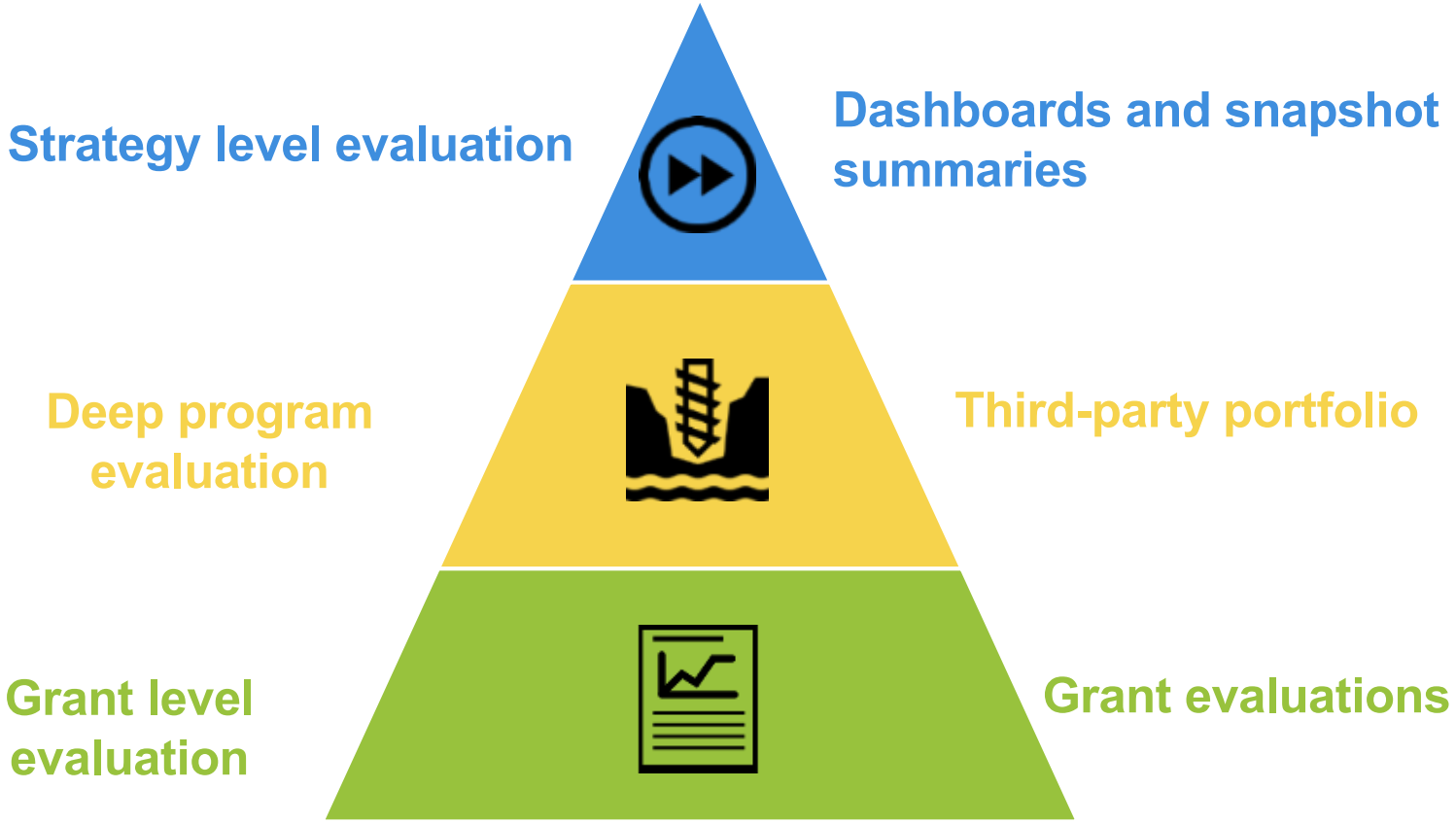
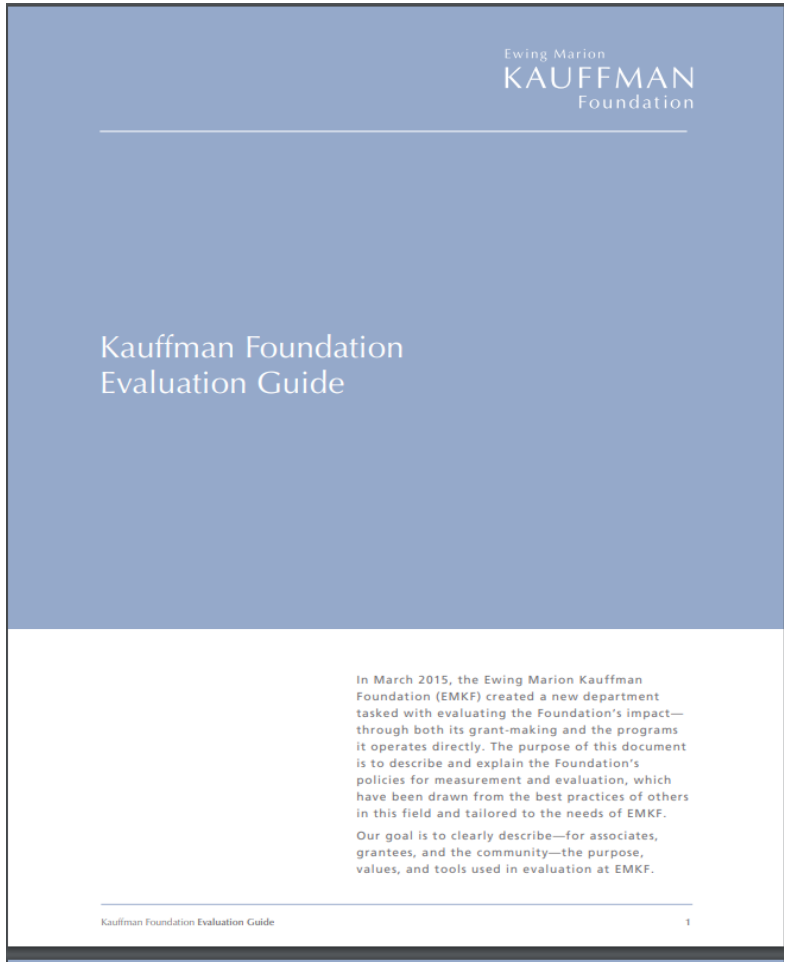
Our initial evaluation model & guide





Ewing Marion KAUFFMAN Foundation

Kauffman Foundation Evaluation Guide

In March 2015, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation (EMKF) created a new department tasked with evaluating the Foundation's impact—through both its grant-making and the programs it operates directly. The purpose of this document is to describe and explain the Foundation's policies for measurement and evaluation, which have been drawn from the best practices of others in this field and tailored to the needs of EMKF.

Our goal is to clearly describe—for associates, grantees, and the community—the purpose, values, and tools used in evaluation at EMKF.

Kauffman Foundation Evaluation Guide 1

Our new model

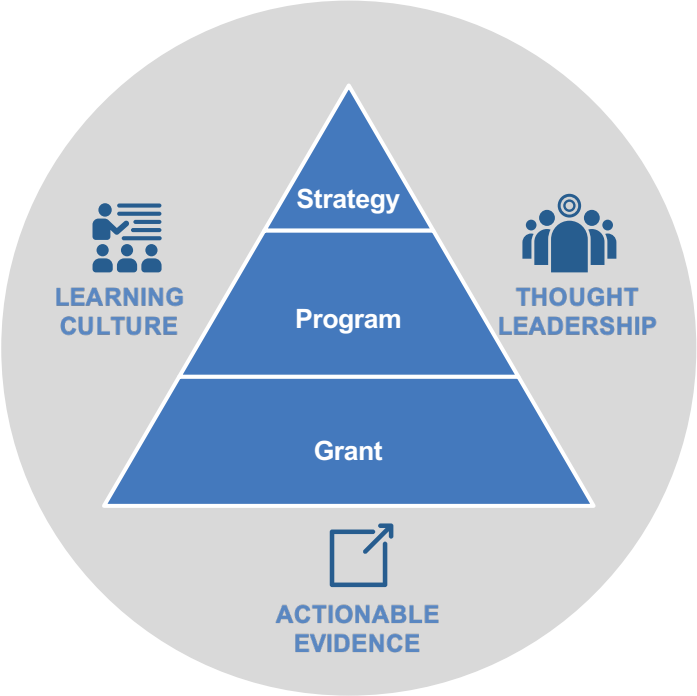
EVALUATION STRATEGY OVERVIEW

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Having clear goals, rigorously measuring results, developing targeted dissemination tools, and creating time and space for staff to turn evidence into insights can increase a foundation's effectiveness and impact. However, many foundations struggle with developing systems and tools to rigorously and effectively evaluate their impact and facilitate learning. Common challenges include:

- Lack of clarity around theories of change and goals for program areas, particularly those that involve systems change;
- Insufficient capacity to collect and analyze data;
- Reporting that does provide actionable insights for staff; and/or
- A culture that does not prioritize reflection and learning as a means of continuous improvement.

INITIATIVES & STRATEGIES



GOALS

The Evaluation Department is a **strong partner** in moving forward the work of every program area.

Evaluation is producing **actionable evidence** about the Foundation's grants, programs, and strategies:

Rigorous: Evidence meets the highest standard possible.

Meaningful: Evidence applies directly to the work of program areas.

Timely: Evidence is provided in time to inform decisions.

Accessible: Evidence is presented in ways that facilitate staff engagement.

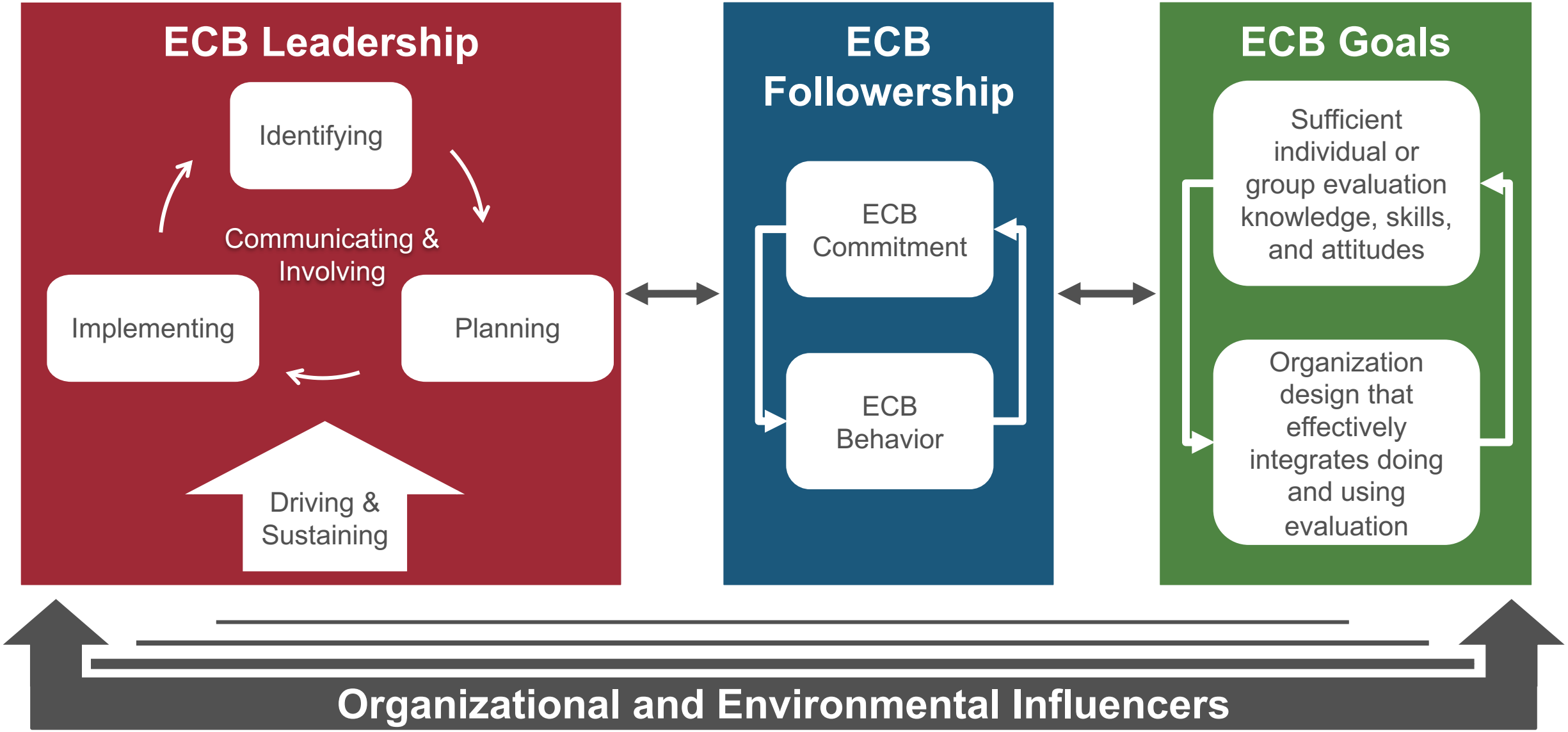
Staff are engaged in **reflection and learning** that produces valuable insights into their grants, programs, and strategies.

Kauffman is viewed by grantees and other foundations as a **leader in this field**.

IMPACT

The Foundation has **increased impact** because it consistently engages with actionable evidence and applies learning to adapt strategies.

The ECB Leadership Framework



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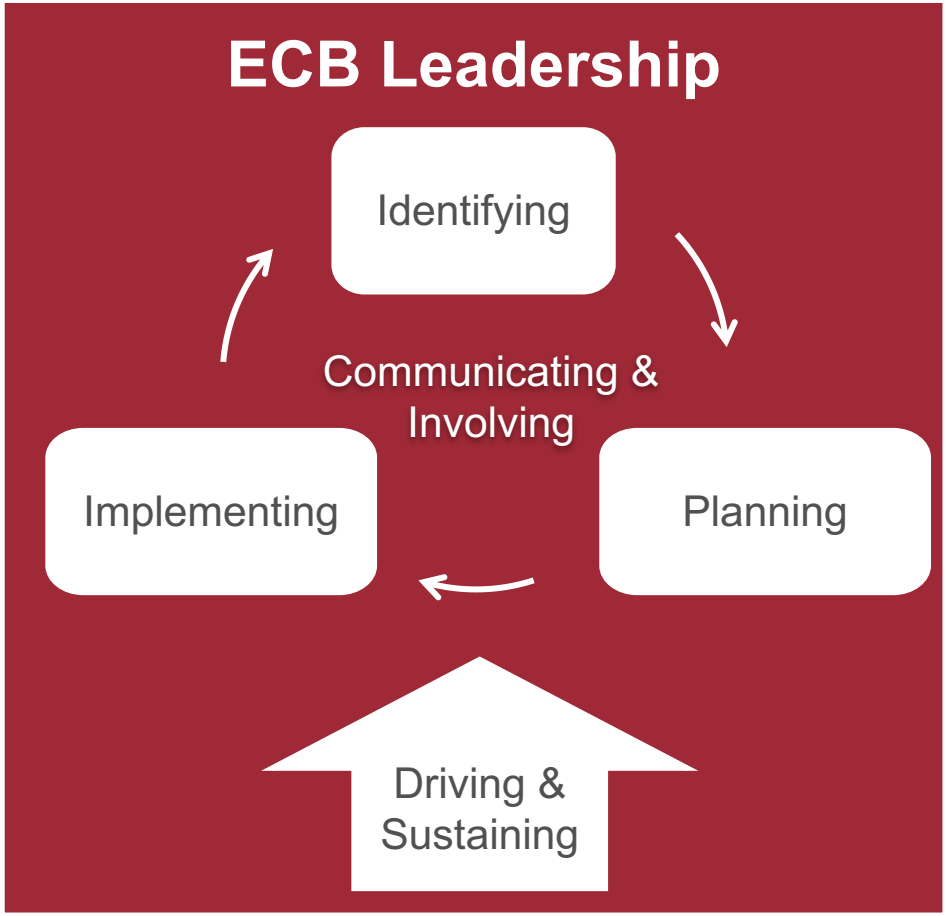

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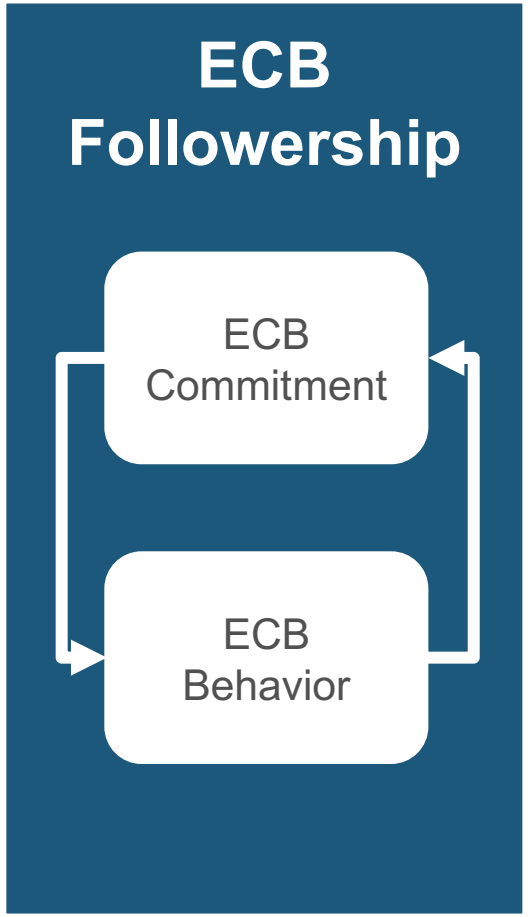

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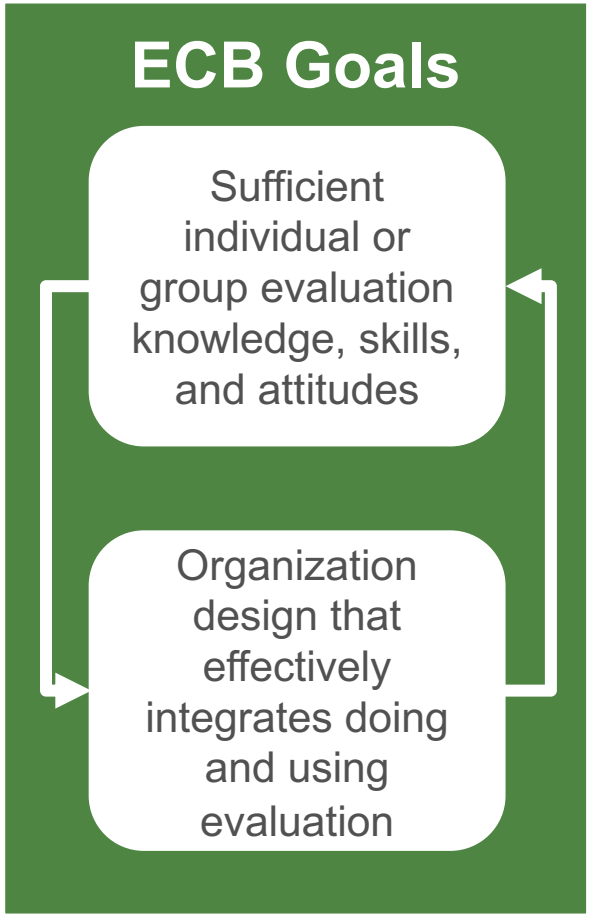


Choices and trade-offs

Learning vs accountability mindset

Top-down vs bottom-up engagement

Internal vs external capacity

Fast vs slow development

What’s next

Attending to culture more intentionally

Improving internal communication and engagement

Connecting the strategy, evaluation, and learning pieces more closely

Building the capacity of our external partners

Building Organizational, Staff, and Board Evaluation Capacity at the Barr Foundation

Yvonne Belanger, Director of Learning & Evaluation

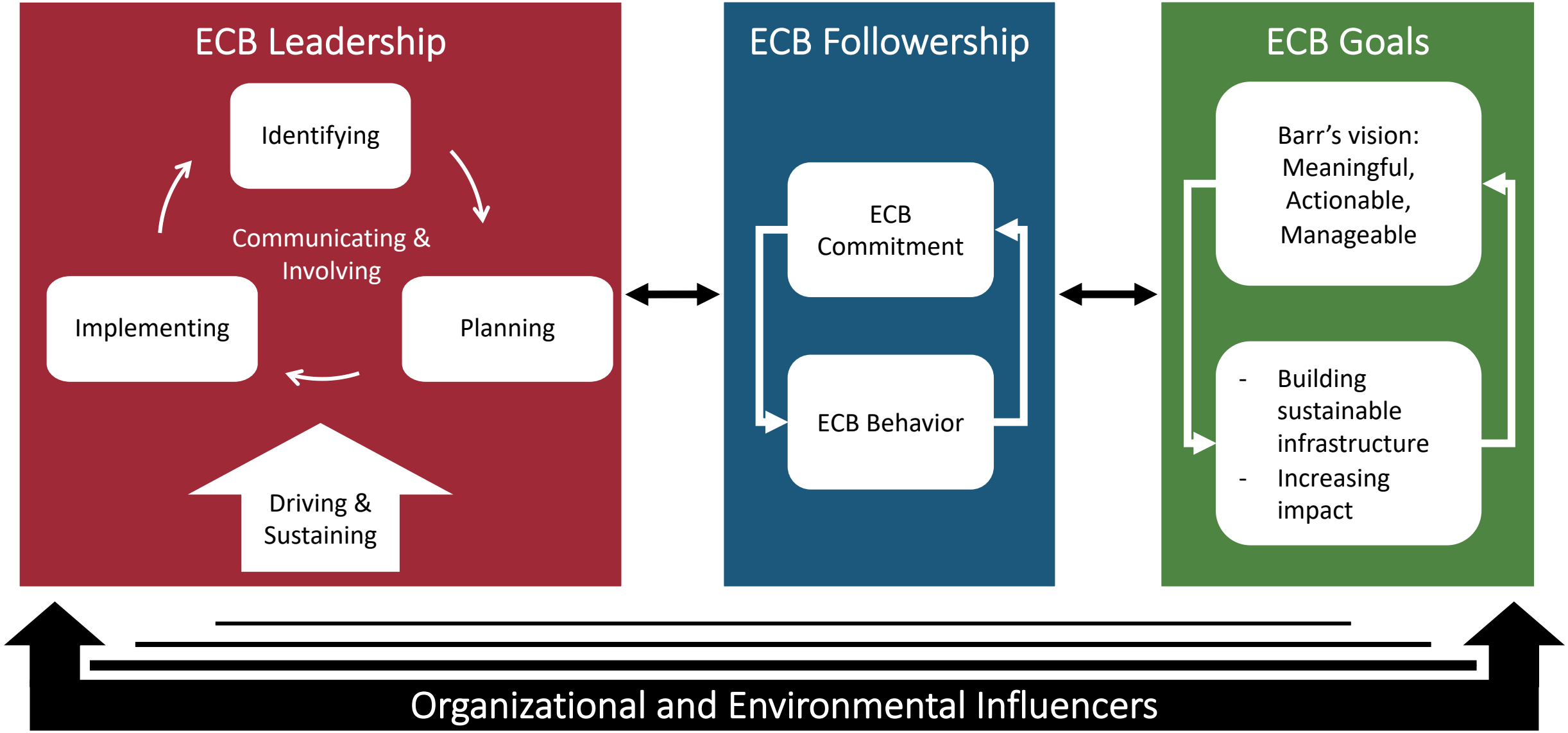
Barr Foundation

- The Barr Foundation invests in human, natural, and creative potential, serving as thoughtful stewards and catalysts.
- Founded in 1997 and based in Boston, Barr invests regionally and selectively engages nationally. Over $1 billion invested in charitable causes since its founding.
- Three focus areas: Arts & Creativity, Climate, Education.
- Six core values: Excellence, Humility, Leadership, Long-Term Perspective, Risk-Taking, Curiosity
- 2019: $90 million grantmaking budget, ~36+ FTE

Evaluation Function at Barr

- First Director of Learning & Evaluation hired in 2017, works across all program areas to support ECB and operations. Reports to VP.
- Key Mindsets that influence evaluation at Barr:
  - Strategic philanthropy
  - A learning organization that values continuous improvement
  - A belief that social change is achieved by dynamic strategies informed by emergent learning
  - An organization that values partnership, strong relationships, and takes a long-term perspective
  - A philosophy that evaluation should be meaningful, actionable, and manageable for the foundation and its grantees

ECB Leadership at the Barr Foundation



Tanya's Takeaways

Q&A

Thank you!

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