

# Applying complexity theory to evidence- to-policy systems

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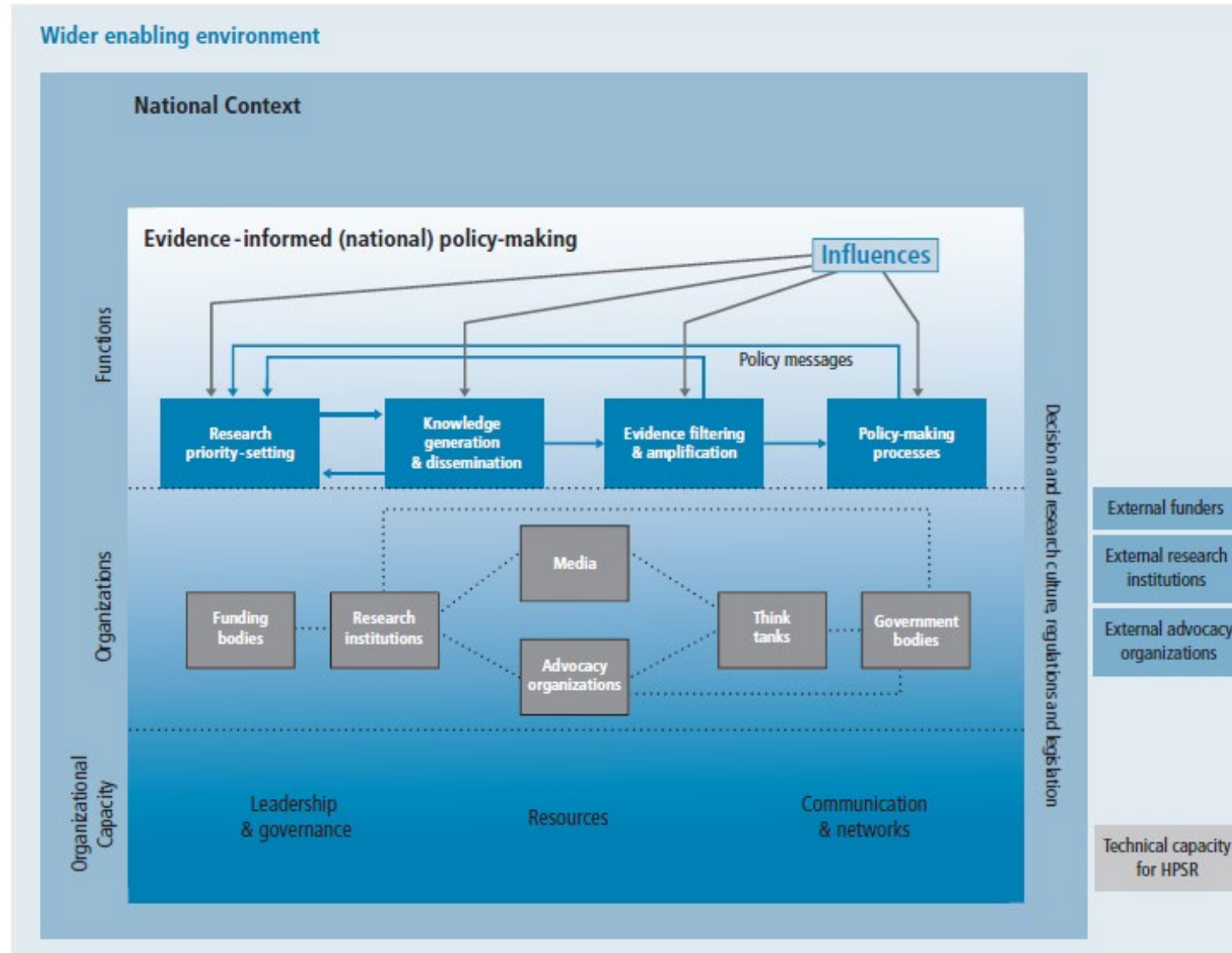
**Swiss TPH Virtual Symposium: Global Health in the  
21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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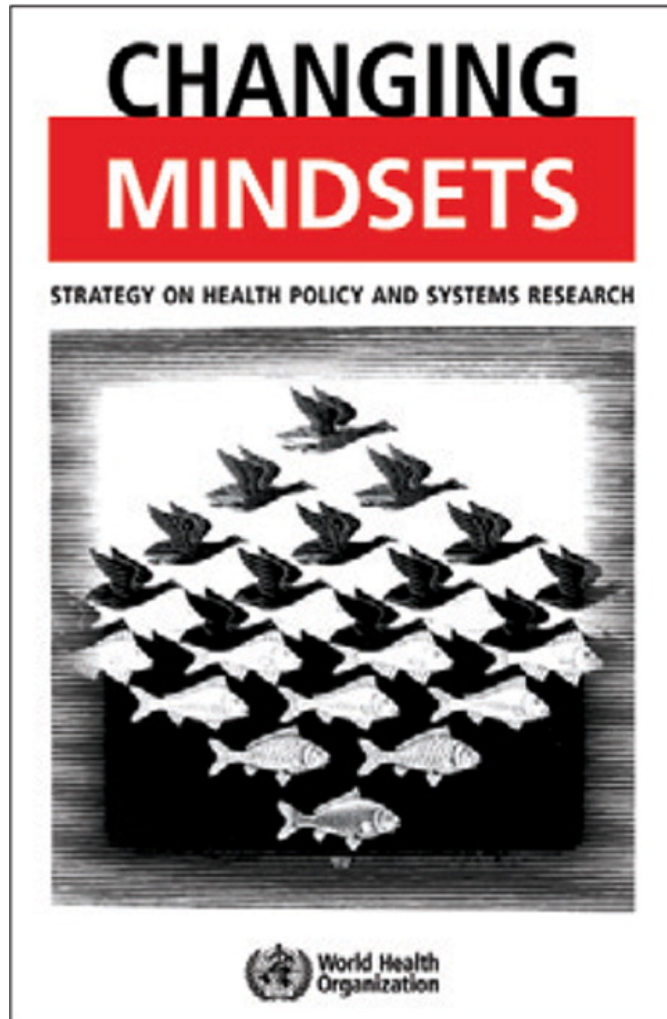


**How do we get evidence into health systems policy and practice?**

# Not a new question



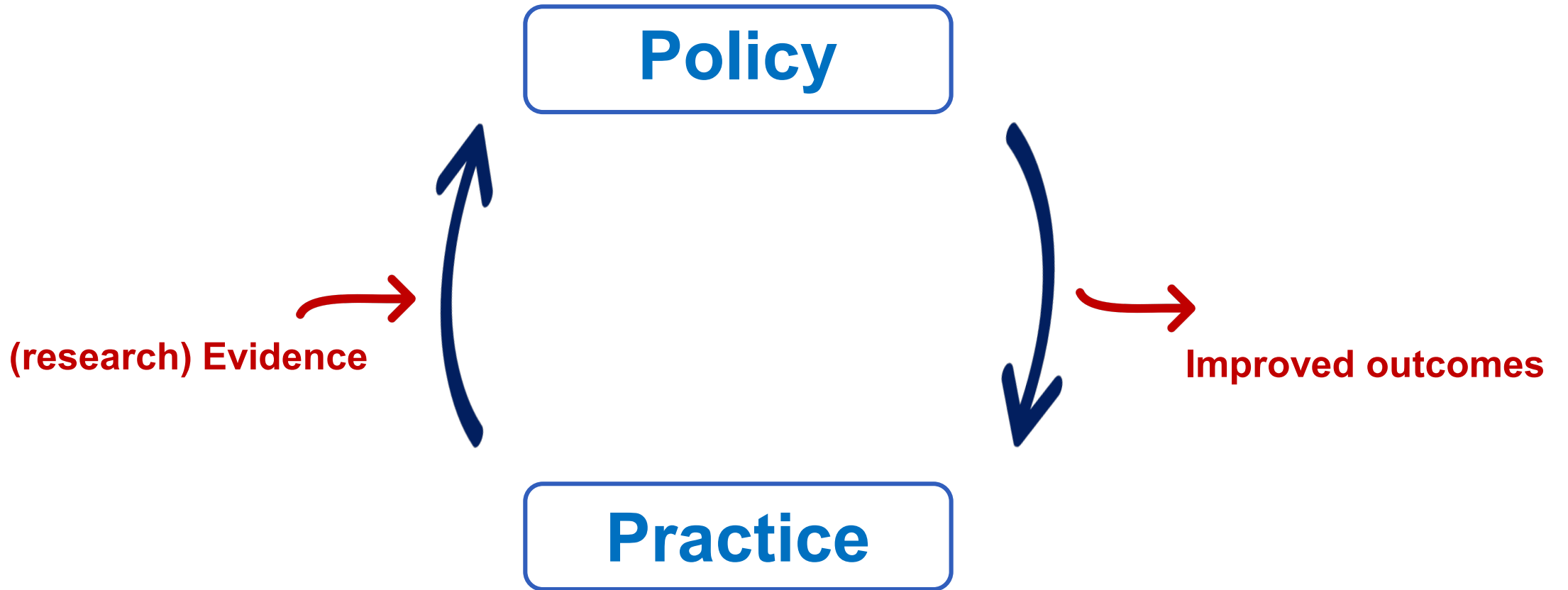
# Growing recognition of complex, integrated nature



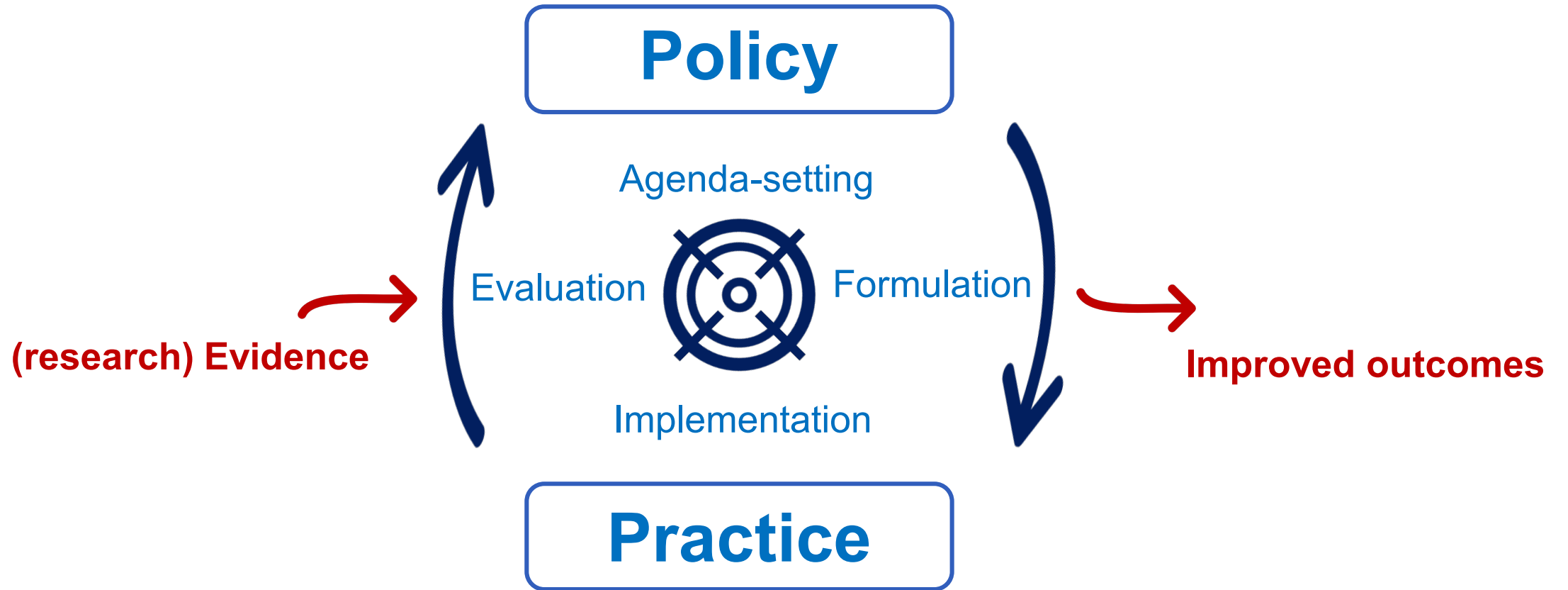
## Global strategy on HPSR (2012)

- *“seeks to make HPSR increasingly demand-driven and responsive to the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century health systems”*
- *“advocates a paradigm that emphasizes the need for close collaboration between researchers and policy/decision-makers rather than work along parallel pathways”*

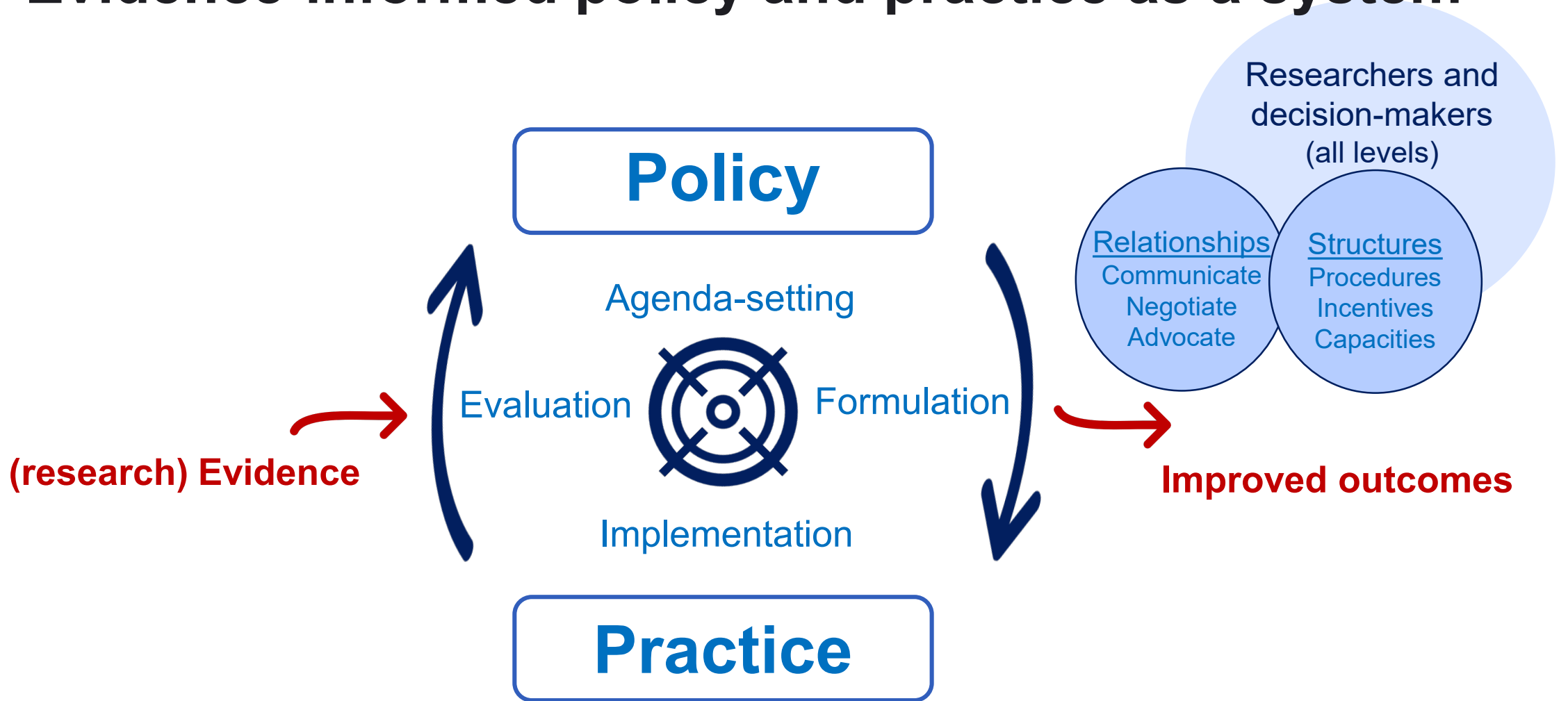
# Evidence-informed policy and practice as a system



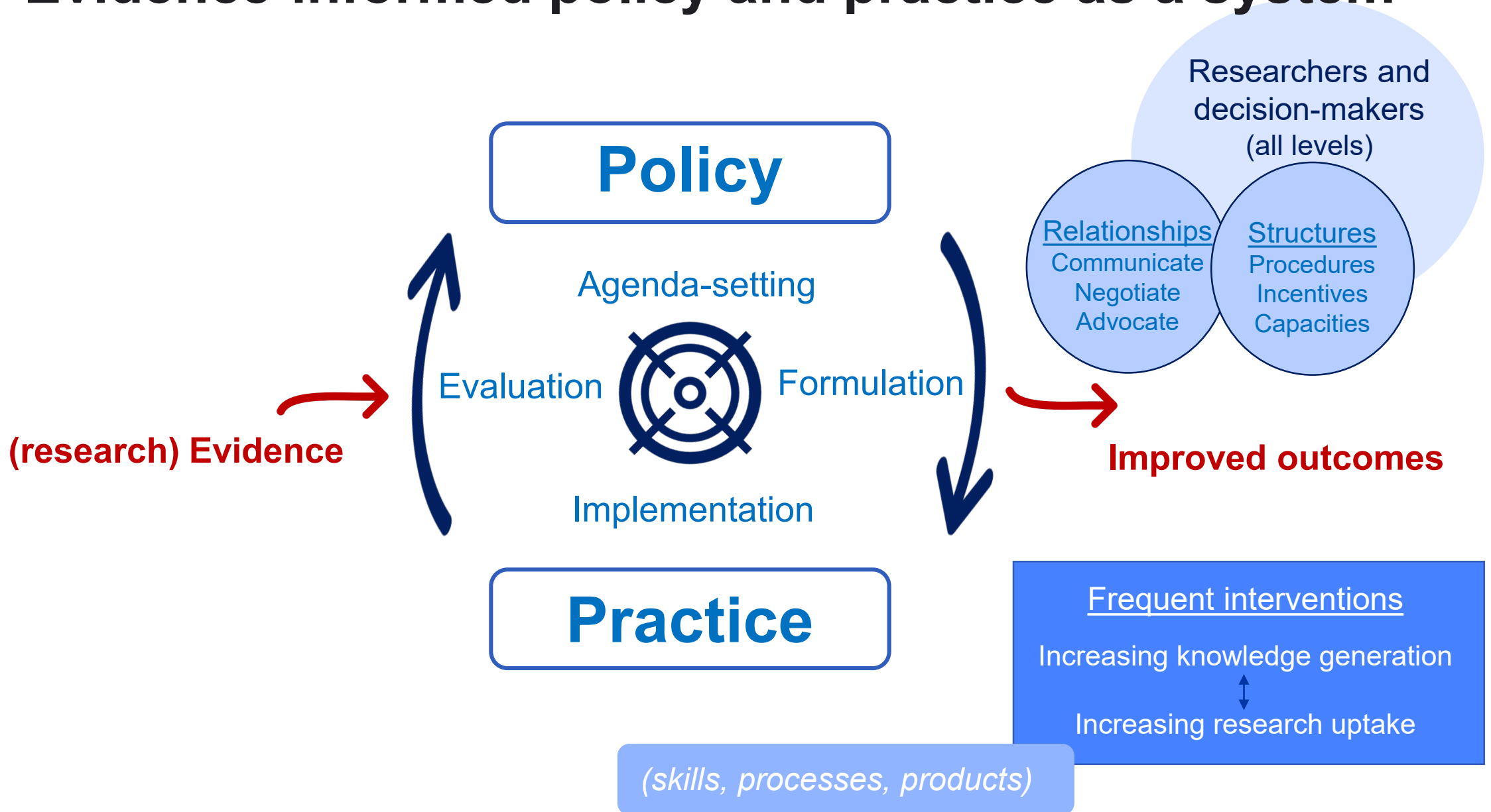
# Evidence-informed policy and practice as a system



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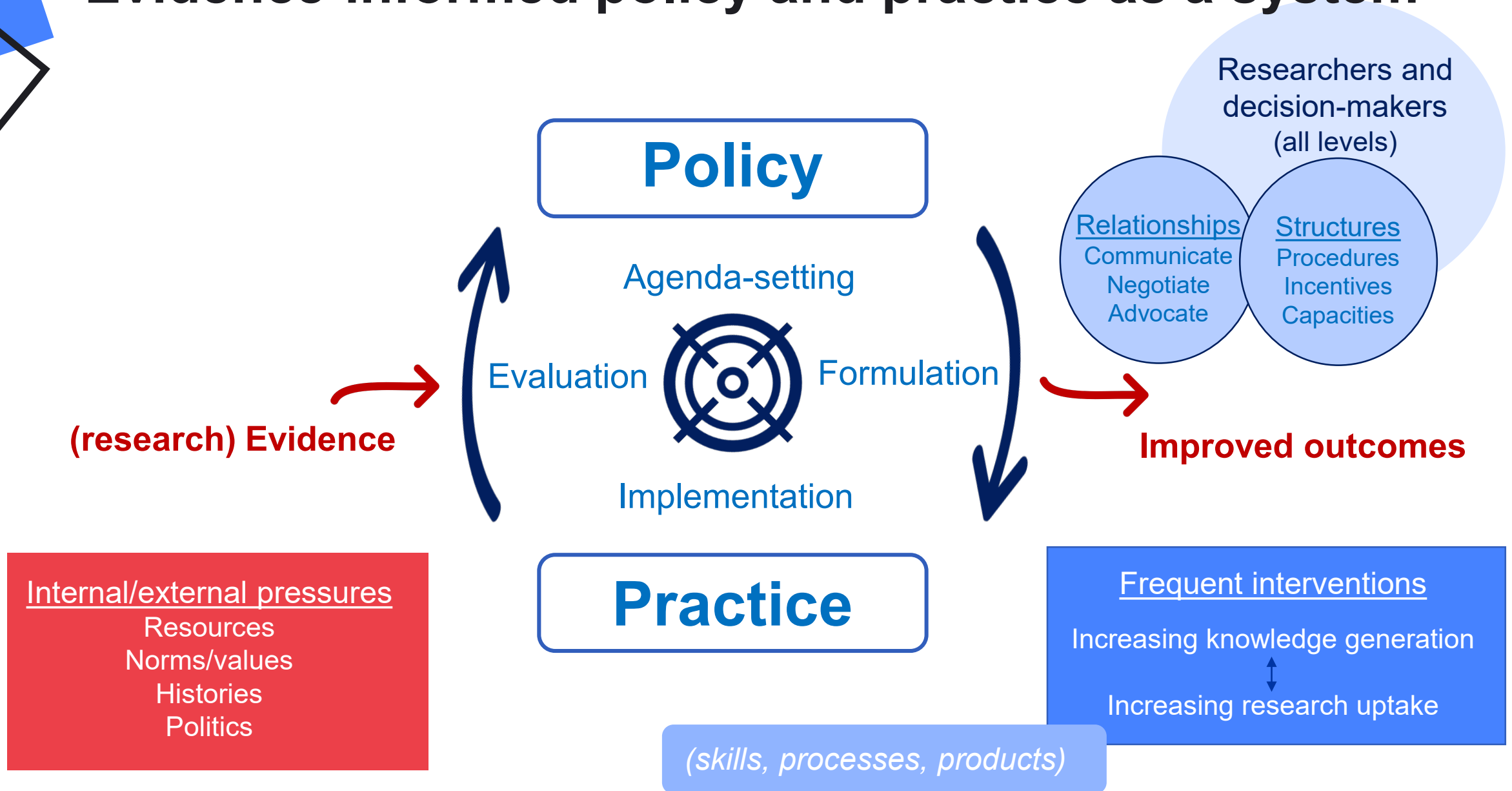


# Evidence-informed policy and practice as a system

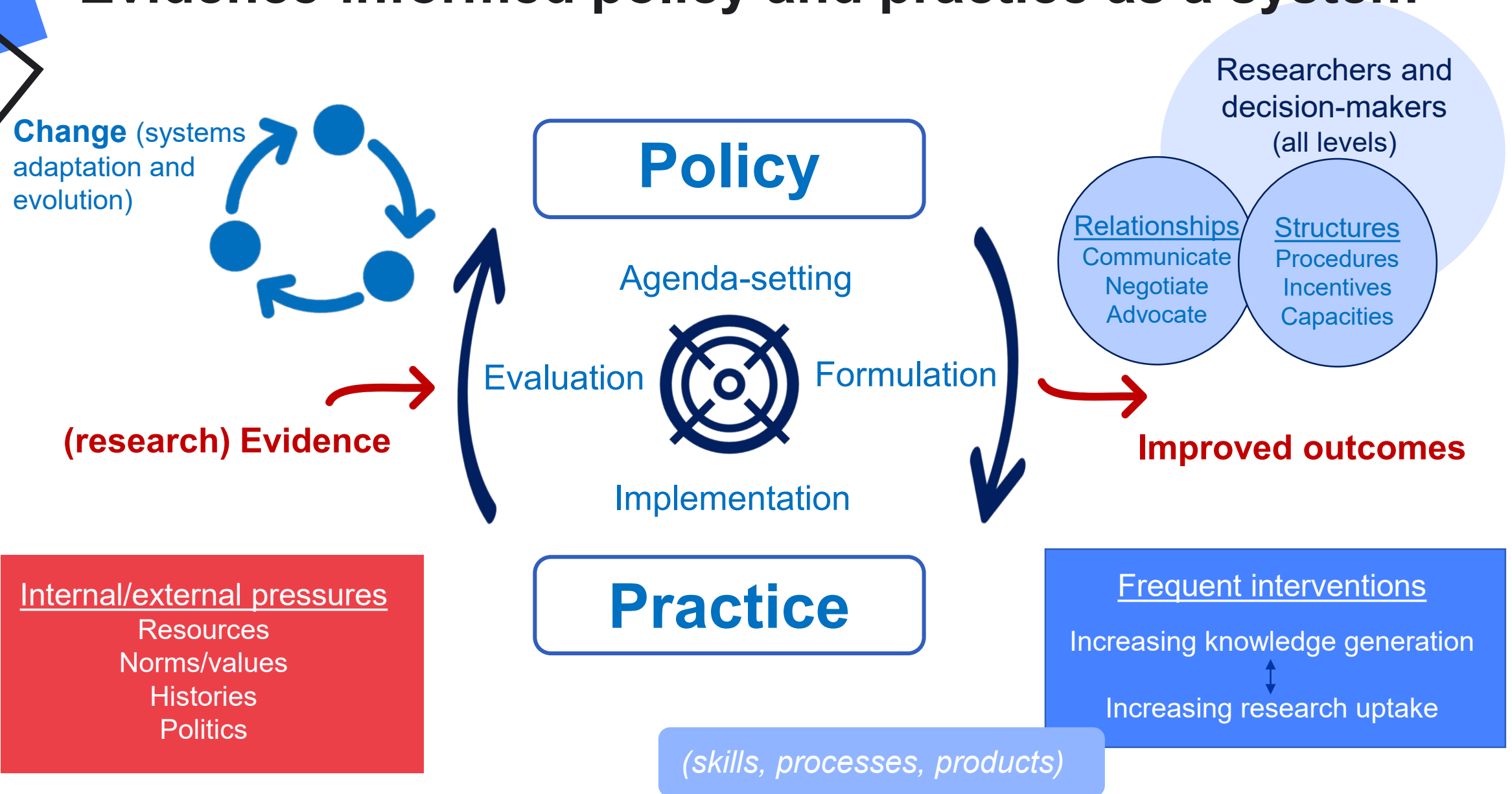




# Evidence-informed policy and practice as a system



# Evidence-informed policy and practice as a system










# What can complexity theory add?

- Analytical tools to theorize/explain interactions between components of the system, i.e., the “how”

## Features of complex adaptive systems

- (1+1= 3) • Holism
-  • Non-linearity
-  • Feedback
-  • Emergence/self-organization
-  • Diffusion nodes (scale-free networks)
-  • Tipping points



# What can complexity theory add?

- Implications for how we design and evaluate evidence-to-policy/practice interventions
1. Institutional approaches
  2. Beyond traditional knowledge translation models
  3. Over a longer time horizon



# Alliance examples – strengthening evidence systems

## Embedded rapid reviews

- Research synthesis platforms embedded within decision-making entities to quickly respond to policy demands

## Institutional mentorship

- Academic institutions mentored to develop evidence-informed programming for policy communities

## Institutionalizing government use of research

- Incorporating evidence-use in existing government structures



**How (why, where, when and with whom) do we get evidence into health systems policy and practice?**

# Thank you!



AllianceHPSR



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