

Which framing of adaptation is adequate?

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Global Climate Forum (GCF)

The Governance of Adaptation Symposium
Amsterdam, the Netherlands
March 22-23, 2012.

Point of departure

Framing is crucial

- Framing is the social and cognitive process of making sense of a phenomenon/challenge
 - Influenced by norms, values, societal discourse, personal experiences, emotions, power, etc.
- The framing adopted defines
 - Which aspect of the issue at stake may be perceived and articulated
 - Which questions may be raised
 - Which approaches/methods may be applied

Framing of the analyst

- Here, we consider the framing of the person who is assessing or implementing adaptation
 - Researchers, policy analyst, practitioner, etc.
 - Called **analyst** in the following
- Framing is the first step in any assessment, project, policy process, etc.
 - May be done explicitly, but is often only done implicitly
- “Inadequate” framing may be the single most important barrier to adaptation
 - If an issue is framed wrongly, then all subsequent work is irrelevant

Divers ways of framing and approaching adaptation

- Adaptation as response to climate impacts
- Adaptation as decision making under uncertainty
- Adaptation as the social process of reducing current social vulnerability or enhancing adaptive capacity
- Adaptation as policy integration/mainstreaming
- Adaptation as (multi-level) governance
- Adaptation as (social) learning and adaptive management

Diversity of adaptation situations

- National government departments are
 - preparing adaptation strategies and plans
 - main-streaming adaptation into other policy fields.
- Humanitarian and development NGOs are supporting local communities in building adaptive capacity.
- Donors are developing
 - mechanisms for allocating funds to the “most vulnerable” countries, and
 - metrics to prove that money is spent effectively.
- Associations of economic sectors are assessing risks and opportunities that arise under climate change.
- Planners are climate-proofing infrastructure investments
- Emergency managers are preparing contingency plans, early-warning systems, etc.

Research question

- Which framing and approach is appropriate in which situation?
 - Given the diversity of adaptation situations addressed under the broad label of adaptation, there can not be a single framing/approach.
 - But it also seems clear that not every framing is applicable in every situation.

Remarks on terminology used

- **Framing** and approach
 - We found it difficult to establish a clear cut between framing and approach.
 - Framing is revealed by the way the adaptation situation is approached.
- **Adaptation situations** are characterised by
 - relevant actors, institutions, available adaptation options, type of hazard, other drivers, knowledge thereof, ...
- **Approach**
 - the sequence of tasks addressed and methods applied
- **Tasks** includes both
 - **research tasks = research questions**, whose goal is to generate knowledge about an adaptation situation, and
 - **action tasks**, which change the adaptation situation.

Method

Method (1)

- Data acquisition
 - Self-documentation of research processes within the MEDIATION project
 - Survey of experts involved in adaptation policy processes.
 - Cases from the literature
- For each case we recorded data on
 - the initial framing of the adaptation situation,
 - the sequence of tasks addressed and methods used in approaching the situation, and
 - criteria used to select tasks.

Example data

Ozone is a problem in the UK, primarily in the south-east.
Human exposure to high ozone concentrations leads to health impacts.
European, national and local air quality legislation already address ozone.
Impact studies estimate 800 to 1500 additional ozone-related deaths by 2020 p.a. from CC.
Large uncertainty in future ozone concentrations due to air quality and mitigation policy;
physical processes linking CC to ozone formation are not well understood;
age distribution, health levels and public health policy are important determinants of impacts;
Not known if ozone is a threshold pollutant or not.
There is immediate risk of ozone on health with cross-sectoral linkages.
Ozone is episodic, thus related to changes in extremes and trends of warmer weather.

1. How will climate change affect ground level ozone and impact on human health?

2. How will autonomous adaptation and existing planned policy affect health impacts?

3. What are most appropriate adaptation strategies ?

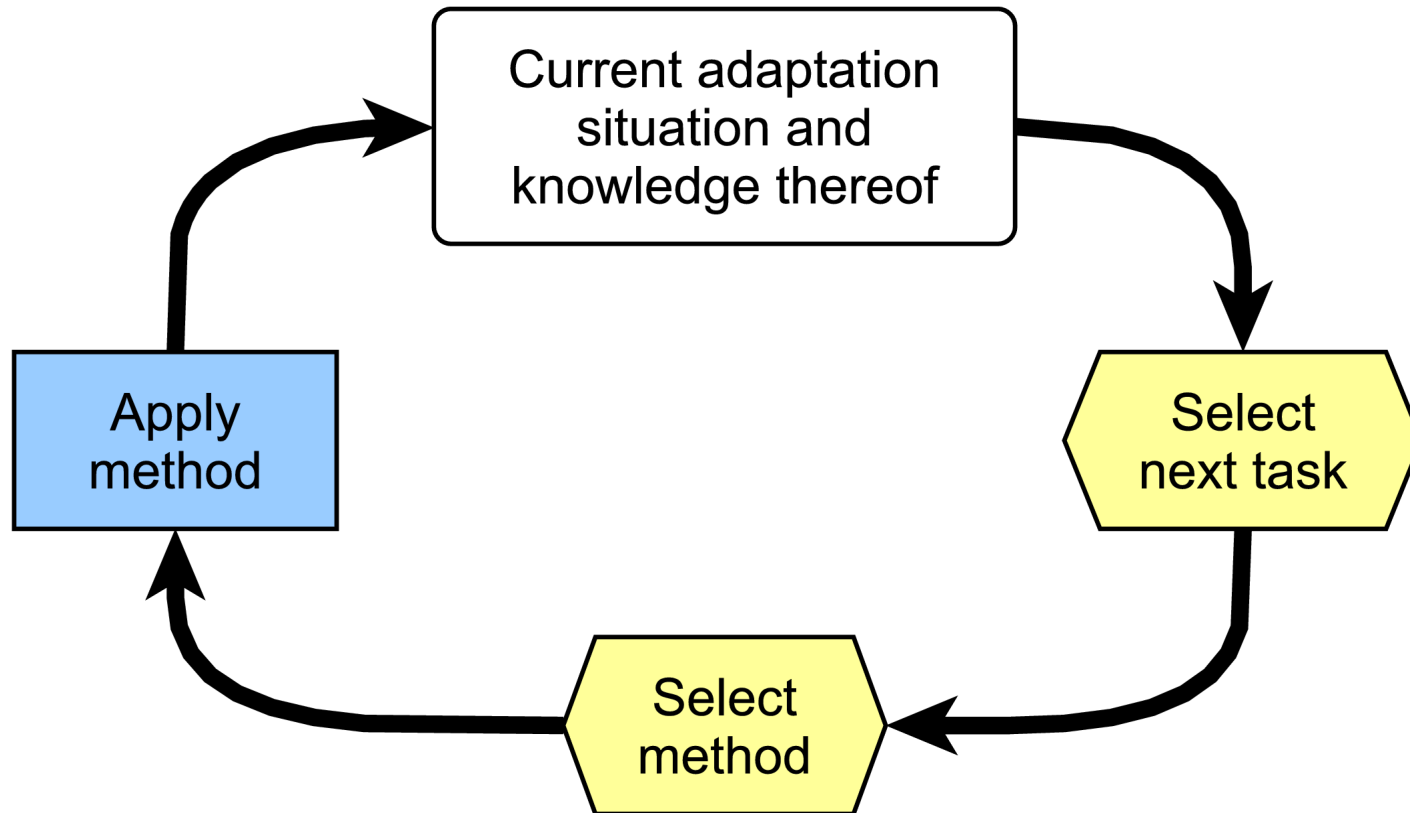
4. What are the different institutions involved?

5. What is the capacity to adapt to climate change of different organizations/institutions in the health sector?

Method (2)

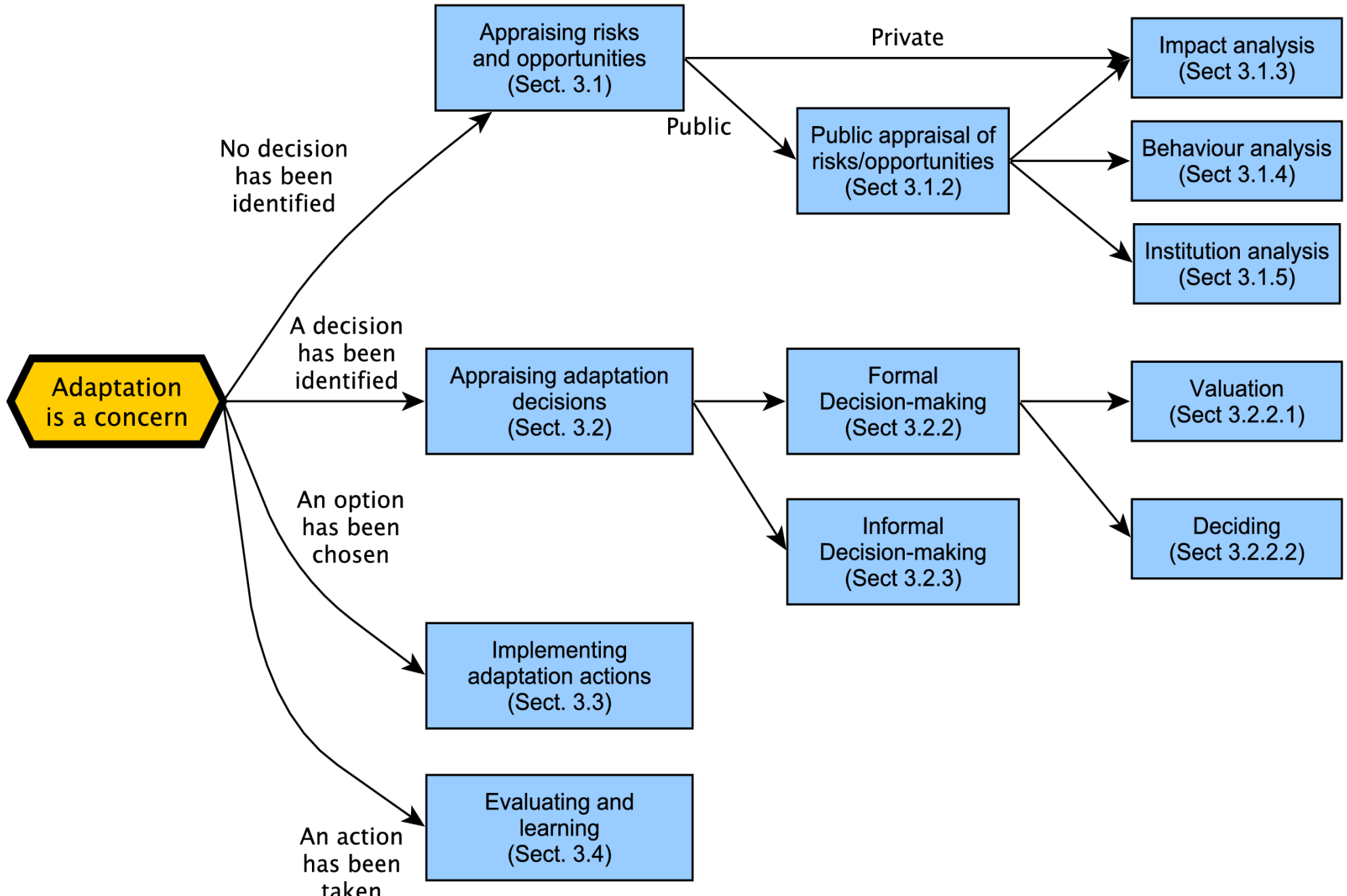
- This data was then meta-analysed
- Typical tasks and relevant characteristics of adaptation situations were abstracted and turned into (partial) prescriptions of the following form:
 - Given an adaptation situation:
 - What are the critical tasks that need to be carried out?
 - Which methods are applicable to these tasks?
- Finally, we represented this in the form of decision trees
 - which, depending on characteristics of the adaptation situation, lead to different tasks and methods.
 - The trees are meant to help an analyst to iteratively identify next tasks and applicable methods in the process of addressing adaptation.

Iterative application of decision trees

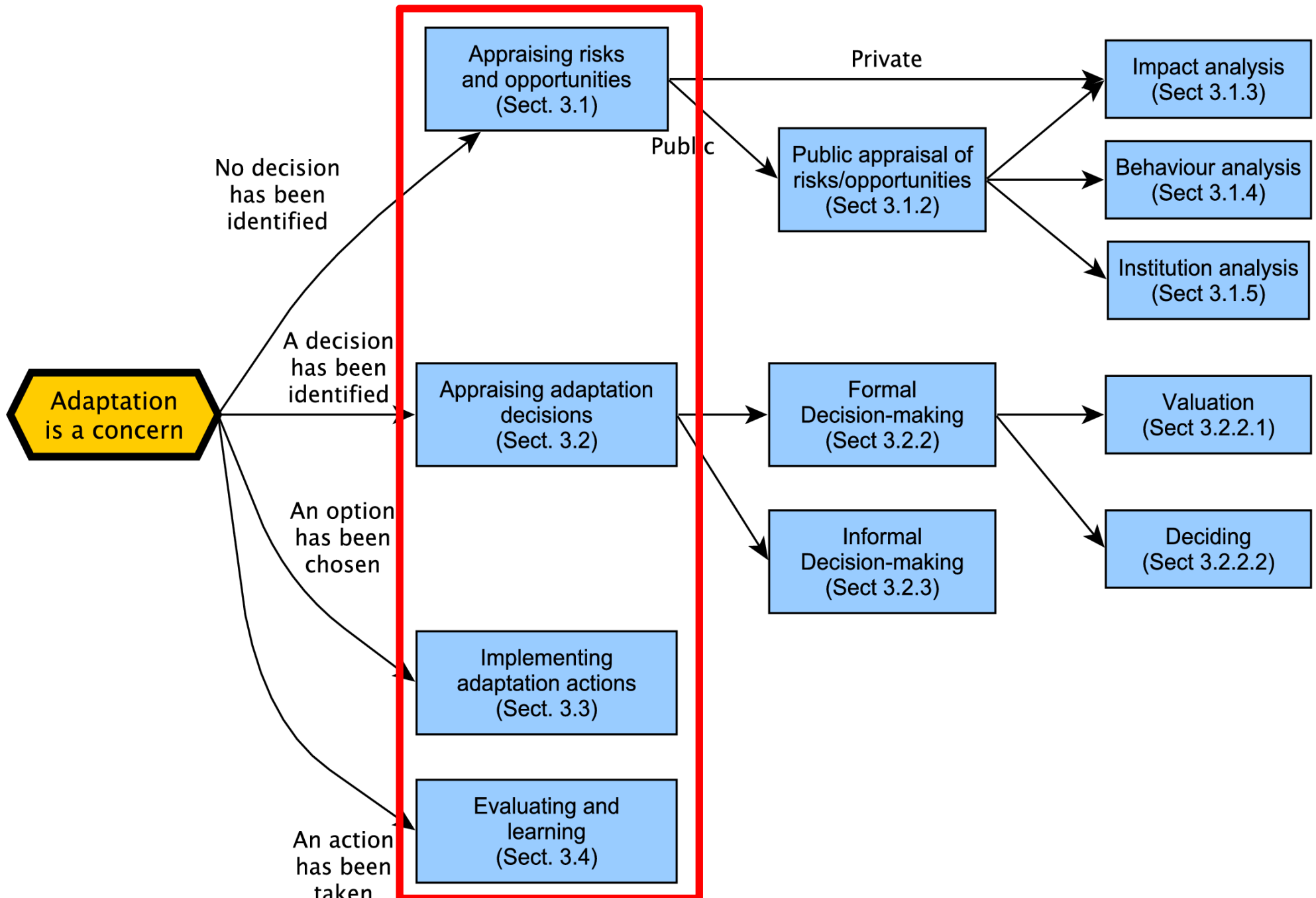


Results

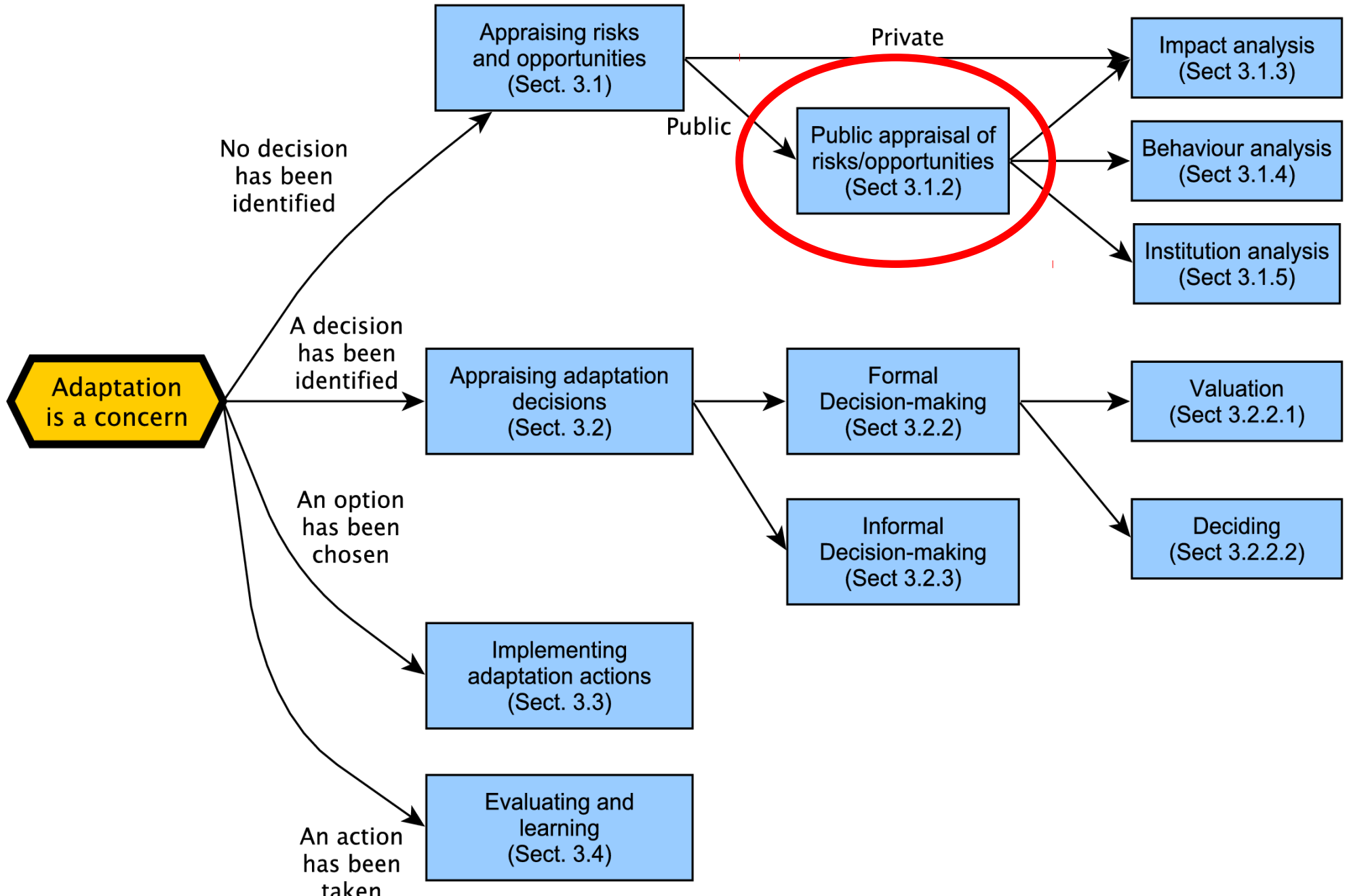
Top-level tasks



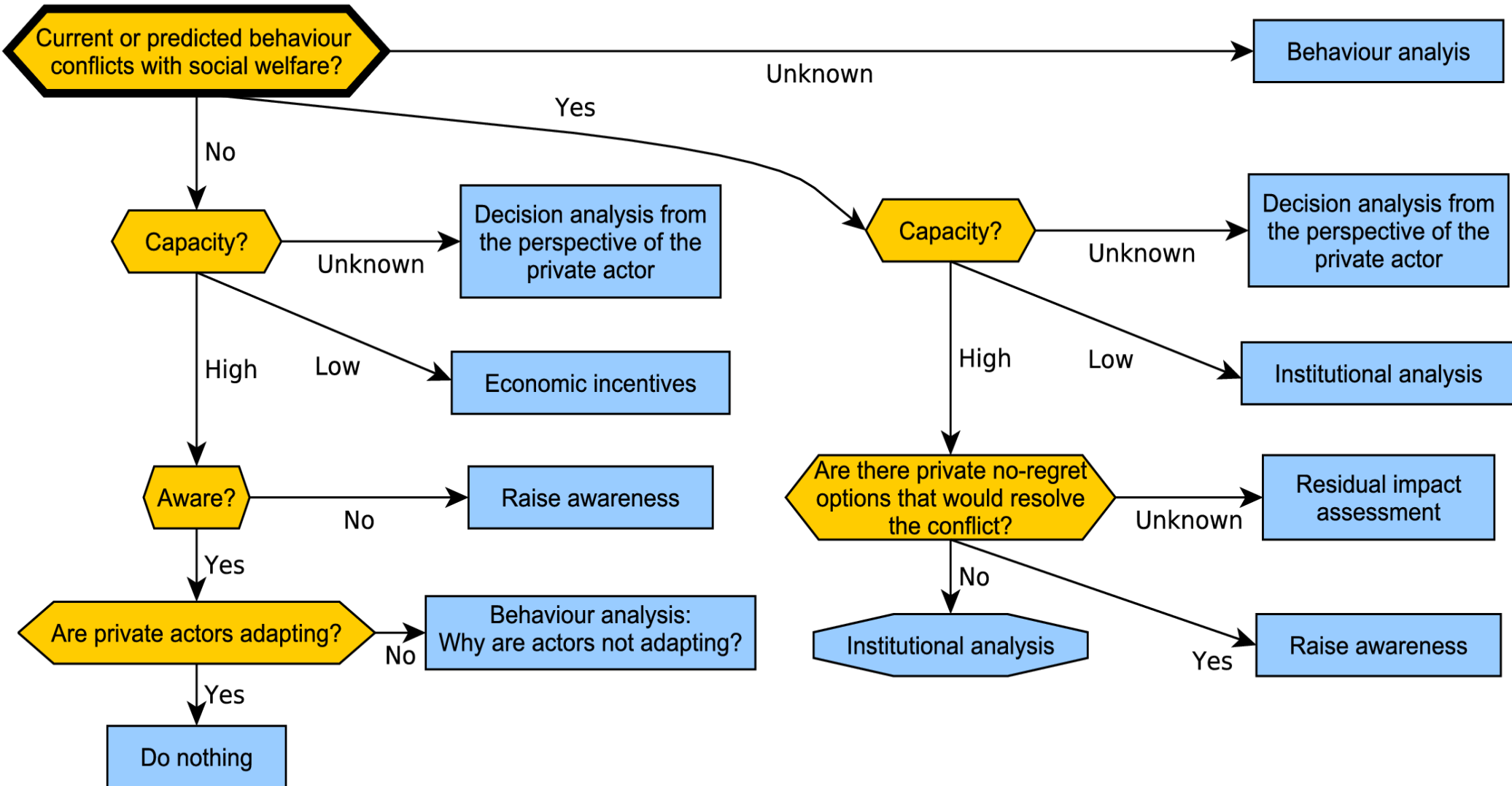
Top-level tasks



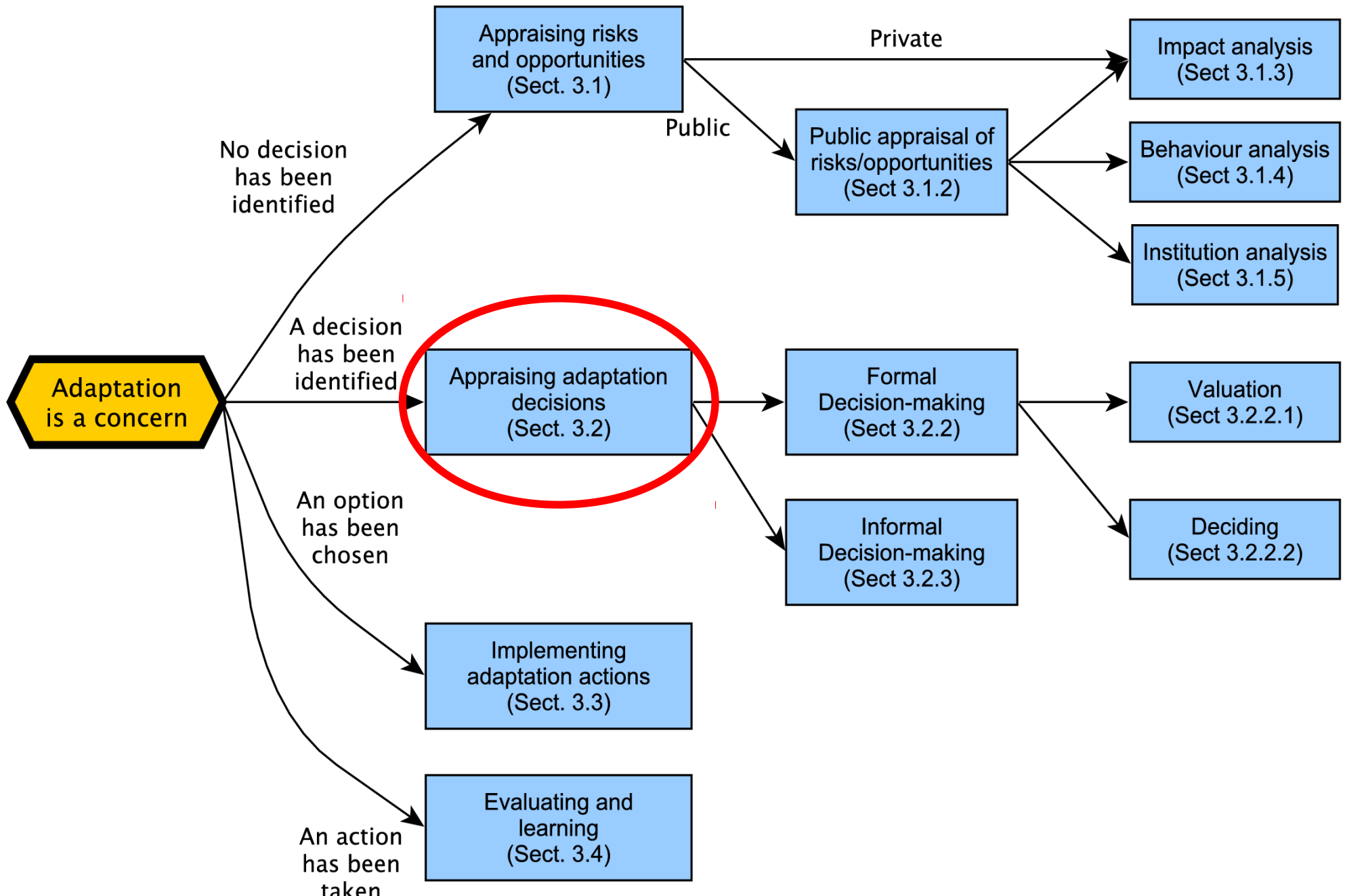
Top-level tasks



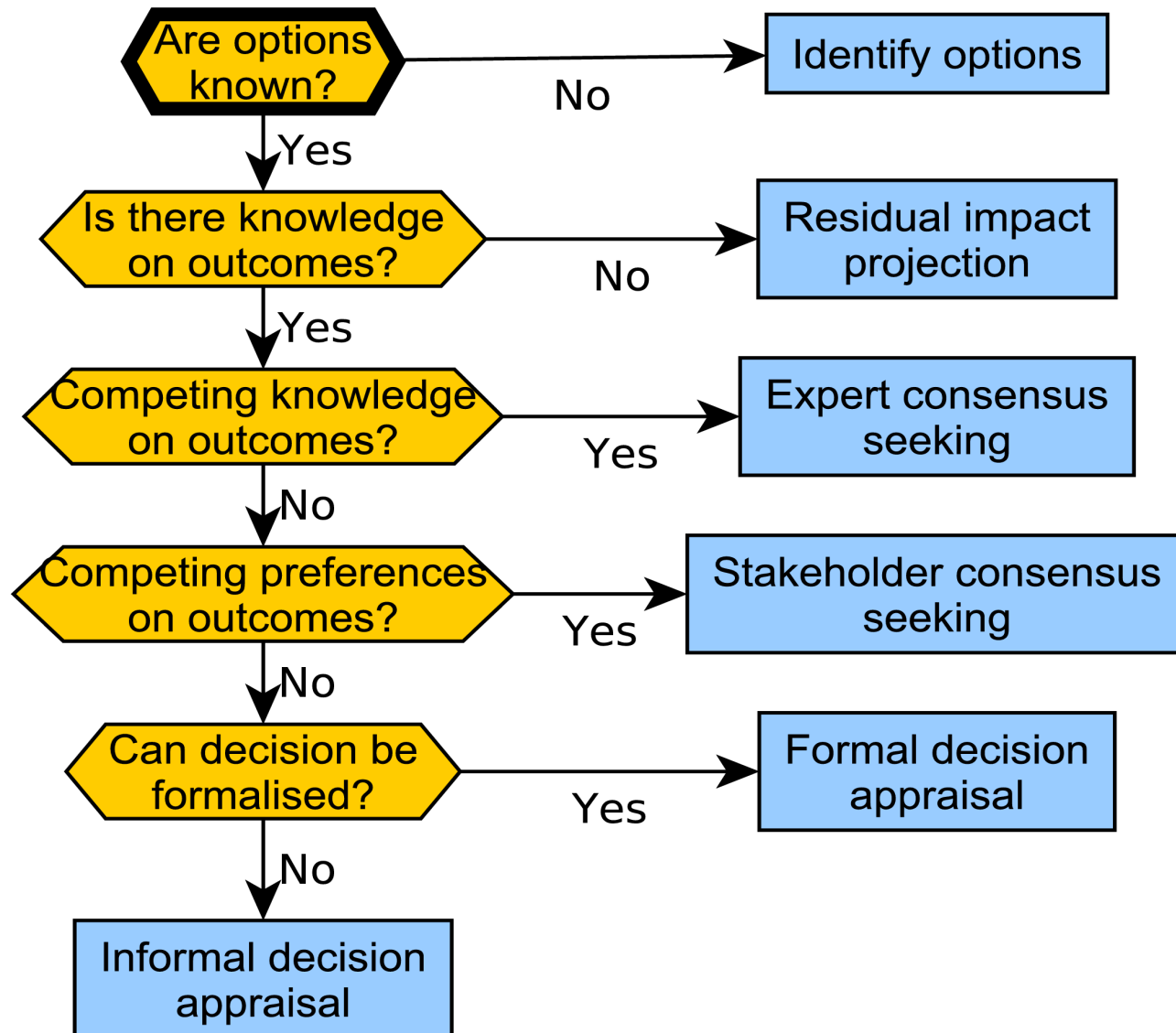
Public appraisal of risks and opportunities



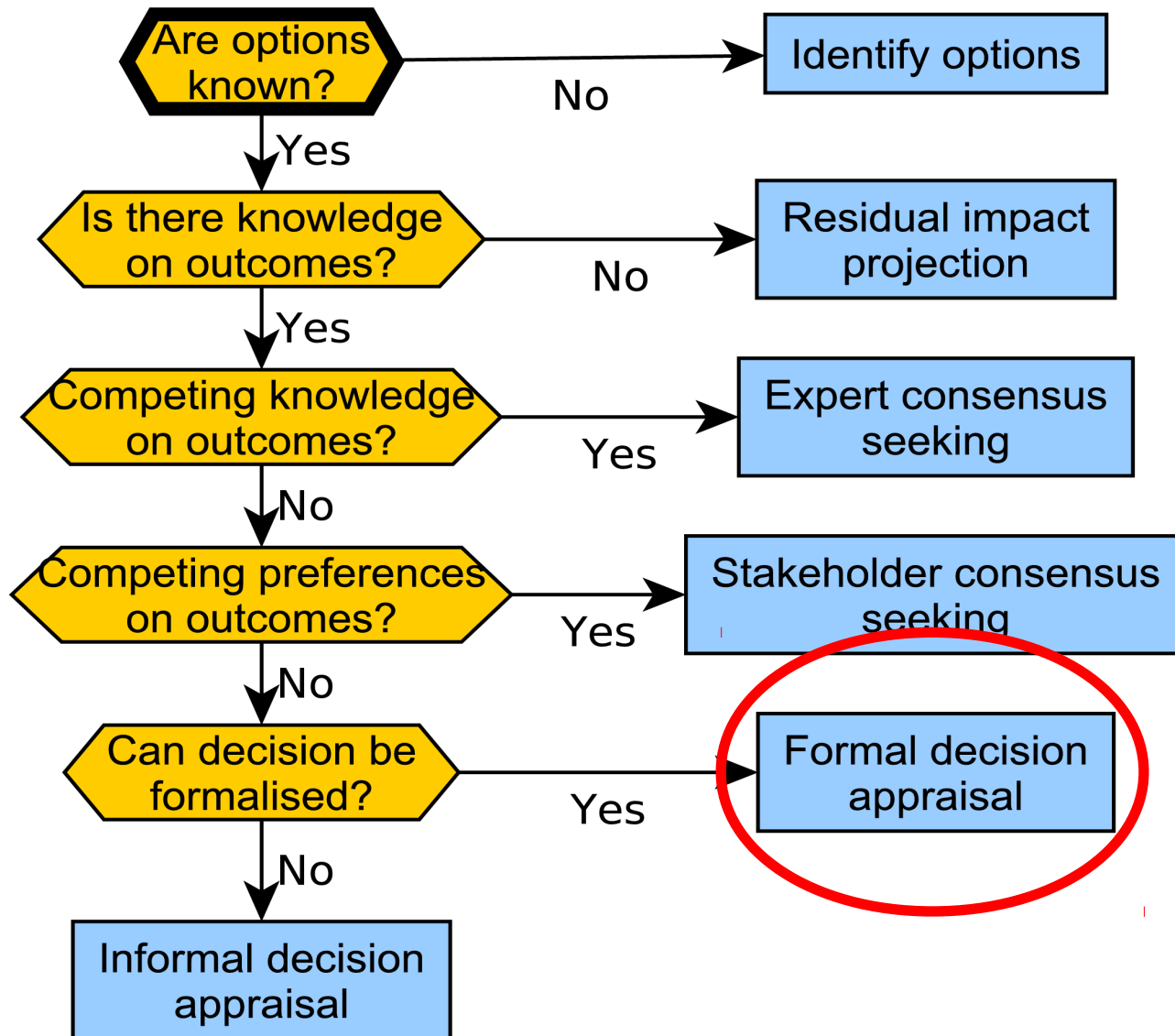
Top-level tasks



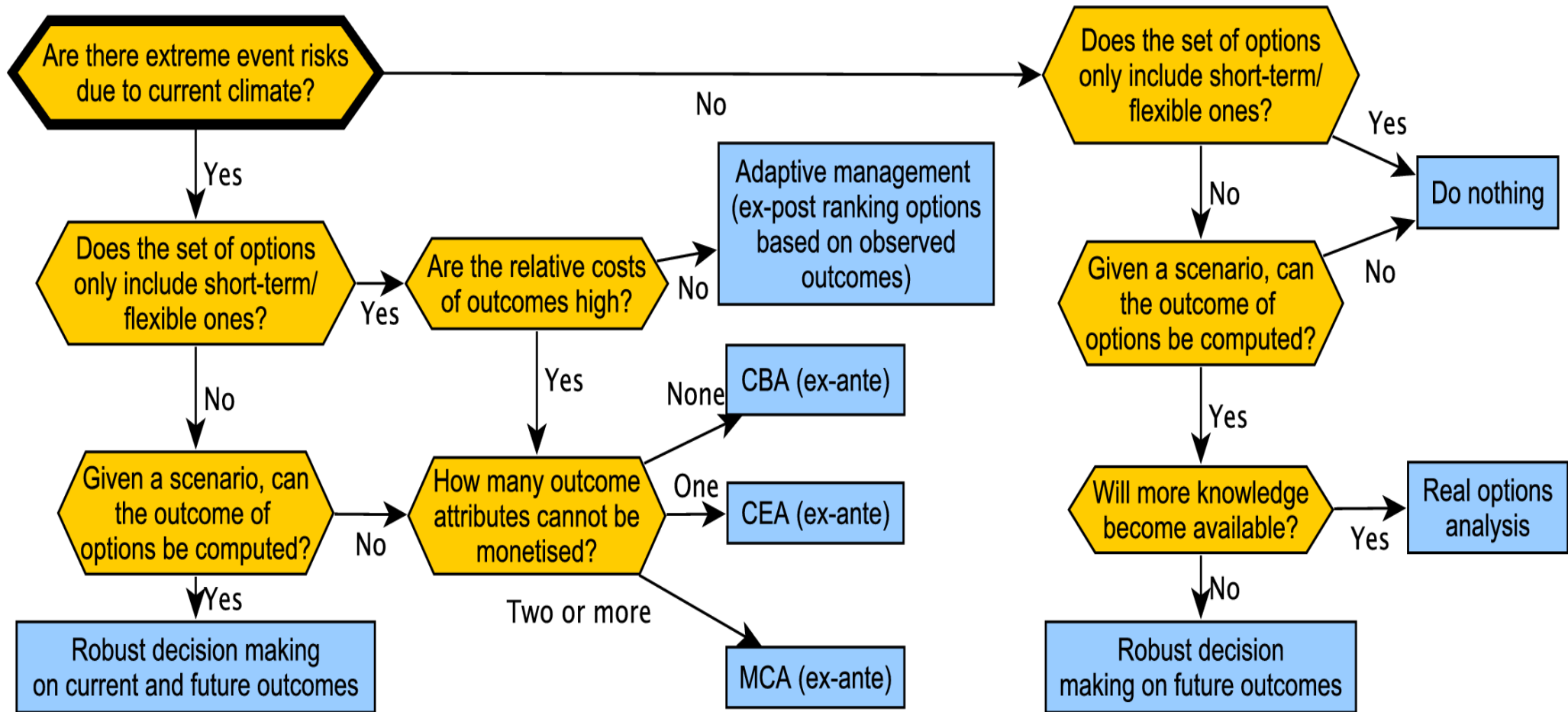
Appraisal of decisions



Appraisal of decisions



Formal decision appraisal



Discussion

Difficulties encountered

- Ambiguous terminology
 - Vulnerability assessment, e.g., may mean anything from running impact models to carrying out institutional analysis.
- Little emphasis on formulating concise research questions or tasks
- Criteria for choosing approach (tasks + methods) are tacit knowledge of the analysts
 - Difficult to elicit
- The choice of relevant tasks/methods is constrained by funding, personal expertise, available models, etc.
- Huge diversity of adaptation situations, tasks and methods
 - Sequencing of criteria is difficult
 - Clear-cuts are difficult to make
 - Decision trees can only be partial and indicative

Outlook

- We will further develop these decision trees into two products
 - PROVIA guideline on assessing climate change vulnerability, impacts and adaptation
 - PROVIA = UNEP based Programme of Research on Climate Change Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation
 - MEDIATION integrated methodology
 - Will be available online
 - Together with cases from research, policy and practise that illustrate the approaches taken in diverse adaptation situations.

Thanks!

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