



# **Building an applicant experience strategy Integrating pre-entry and transition engagement**

***Enhancing the Student Experience 2010  
11 November 2010***

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# What is SPA?

- Set up in 2006 following the Schwartz Report *Fair Admissions to Higher Education: Recommendations for Good Practice* 2004

*“The Group recommends the creation of **a central source of expertise and advice on admissions issues**. Its purpose would be to act as a **resource for institutions** who wish to maintain and enhance excellence in admissions. Such a centre could **lead the continuing development of fair admissions**, evaluating and commissioning research, and **spreading best practice**.”*

- UK's independent and objective voice on HE admissions
- Small team, but with practical and relevant experience

## What is SPA?



# Building an applicant experience strategy

## Admissions in the press

### The Washington Post

*“Competitive colleges are processing record numbers of applications, further complicating the task of predicting who will enrol”*

“So many admitted students chose to attend  
<blank> that the university had to lease a  
hotel and transform it into a residence hall”

“uncertainty at a  
volatile time in  
higher education”

*“reflects the lingering economic downturn  
and an increasingly cautious approach  
by admissions offices”*

17 May 2010



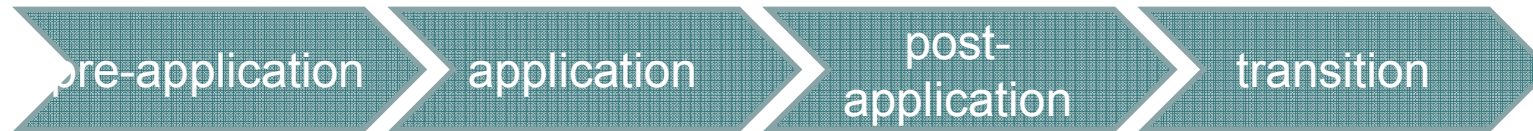
# Building an applicant experience strategy

- The 1994 Group's report in 2007, titled *Enhancing the Student Experience*, noted that:

*“A student's experience of university does not begin at the moment they step onto campus at the beginning of October, and it does not end when they are shaking the hand of the Vice-Chancellor at graduation. The **early relationship between student and university** is important during the applications and admissions process, in **preparing students for university life**, and to **initiate their engagement with and attitudes towards their university** in the best way possible. A student's experience of university can stretch back even further through effective HE engagement with schools and colleges.”*

# Building an applicant experience strategy

- Built under four broad stages



- Adopted a behavioural view of ‘experience’
  - *Interactive participation and engagement, not a passive journey*
- Accepted that marketing and market forces play a determining role
- Effective IAG must link and underpin interactive engagement through all pre-entry stages and beyond

# What is effective IAG?



# Building an applicant experience strategy

## A good applicant experience

- is mutually beneficial to both the applicant and the higher education provider
- prepares, informs and provides equality of opportunity to enter higher education
- should accurately match the student's aims, abilities and aspirations with the character of the institution.
- therefore improves student retention and enhances the strategic mission of the institution

## A poor applicant experience

- is inherently detrimental to both the applicant and the higher education provider – *both lose out*
- perpetuates barriers to entry
- disengages potential applicants and their advisors
- risks incongruence between student expectations and institutional character
- therefore embeds an enrolment strategy leading to unfulfilled potential and increased drop-out

## Building an applicant experience strategy

“The only thing to do with good advice is pass it on. It is never any use to oneself.”

*Oscar Wilde*



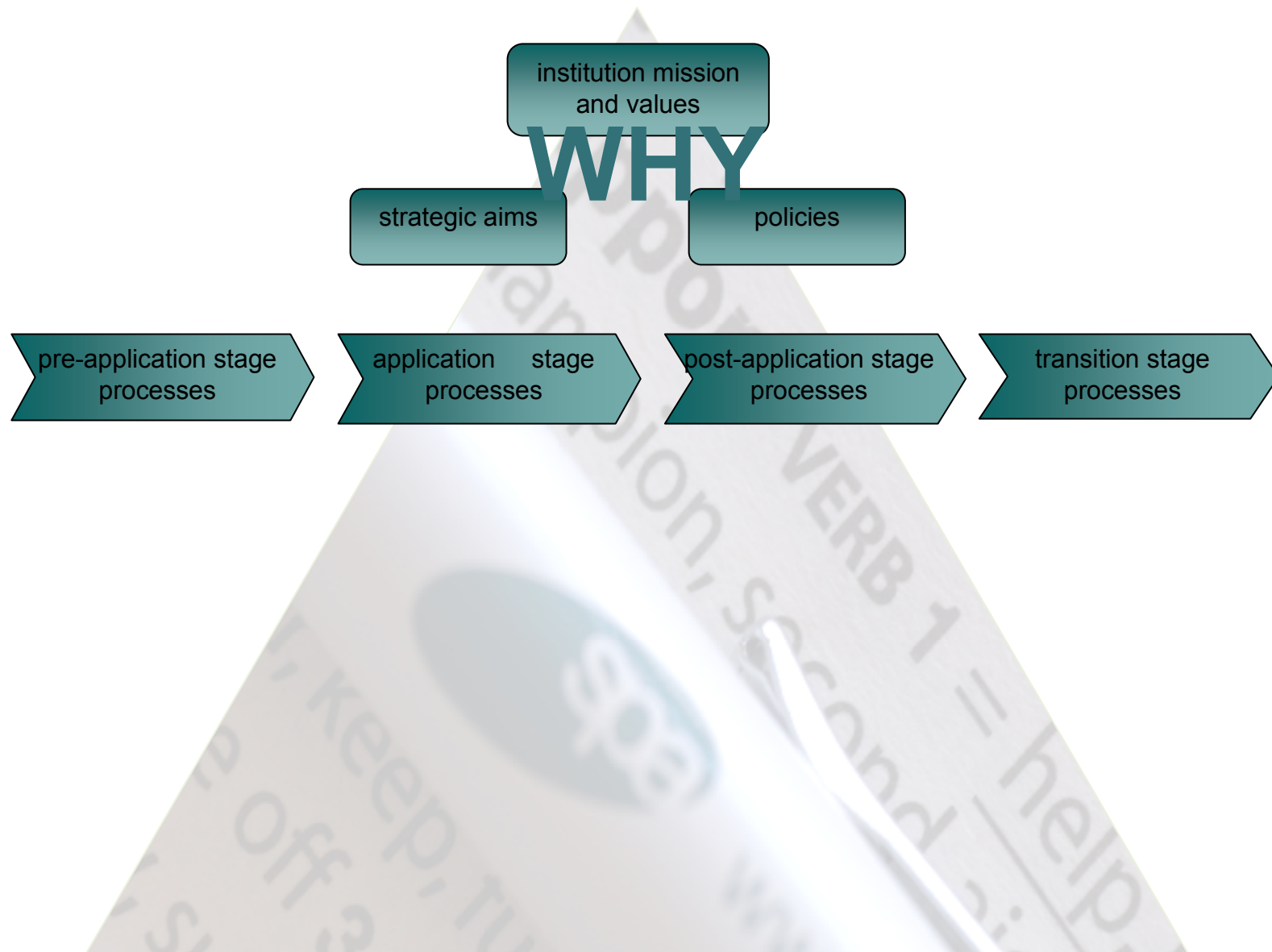
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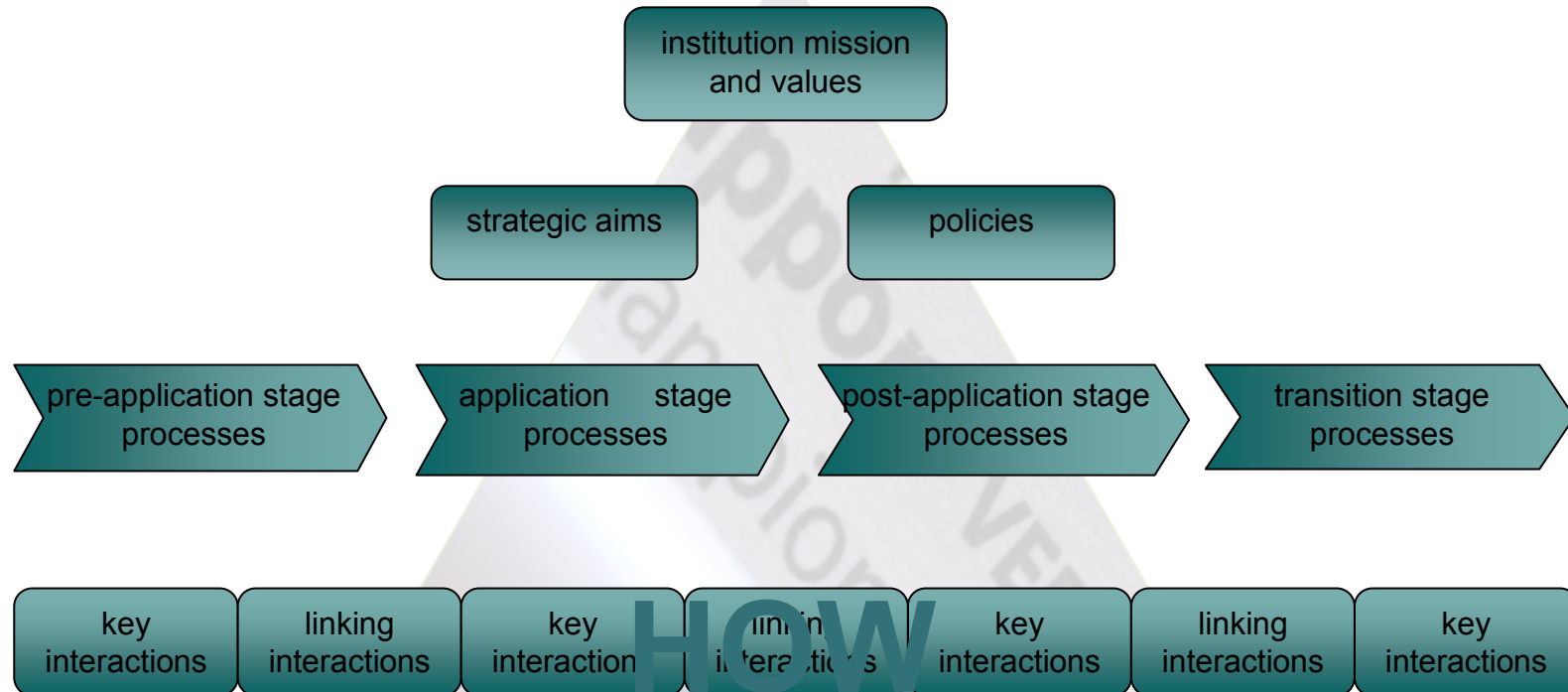
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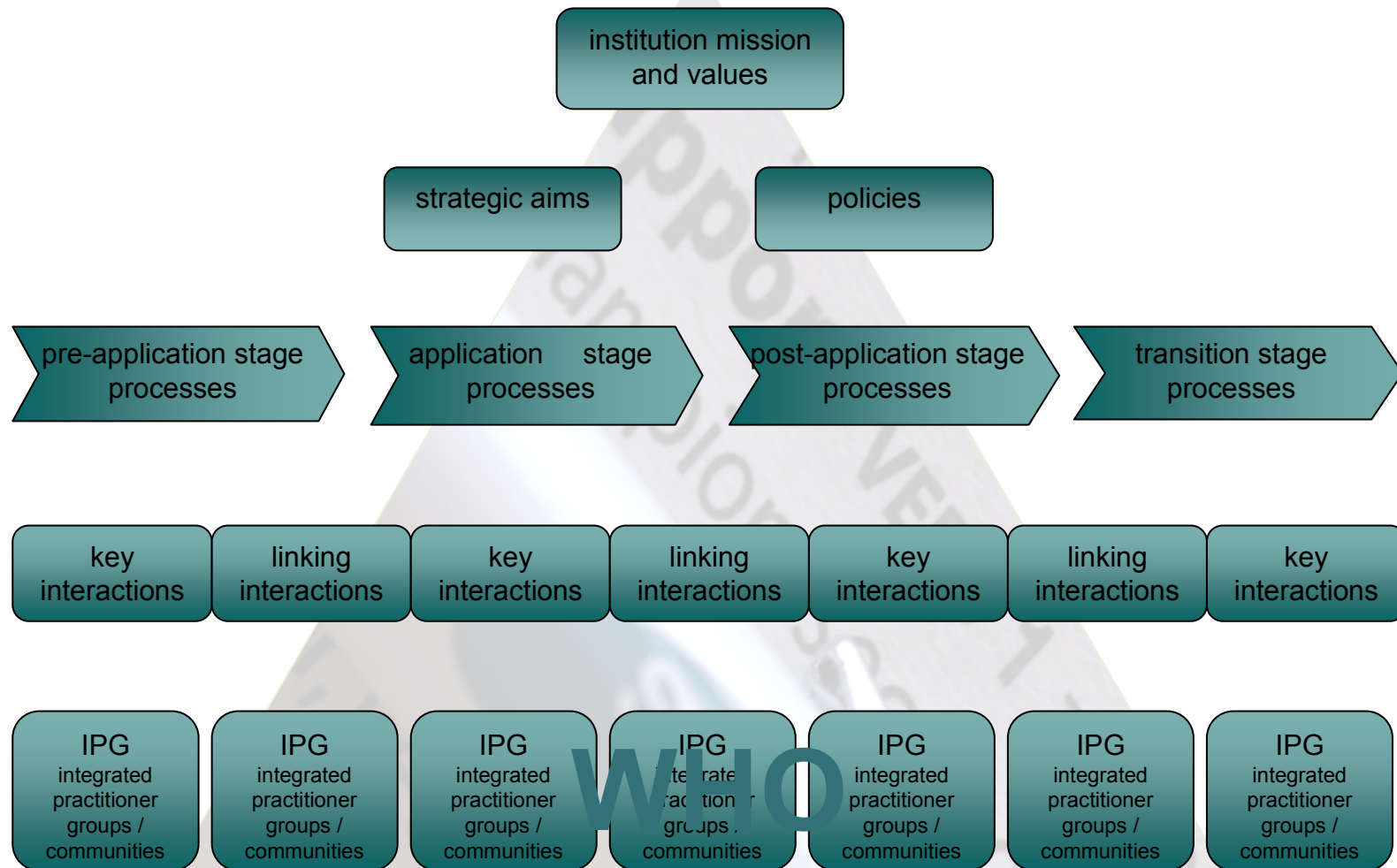
# Building an applicant experience strategy



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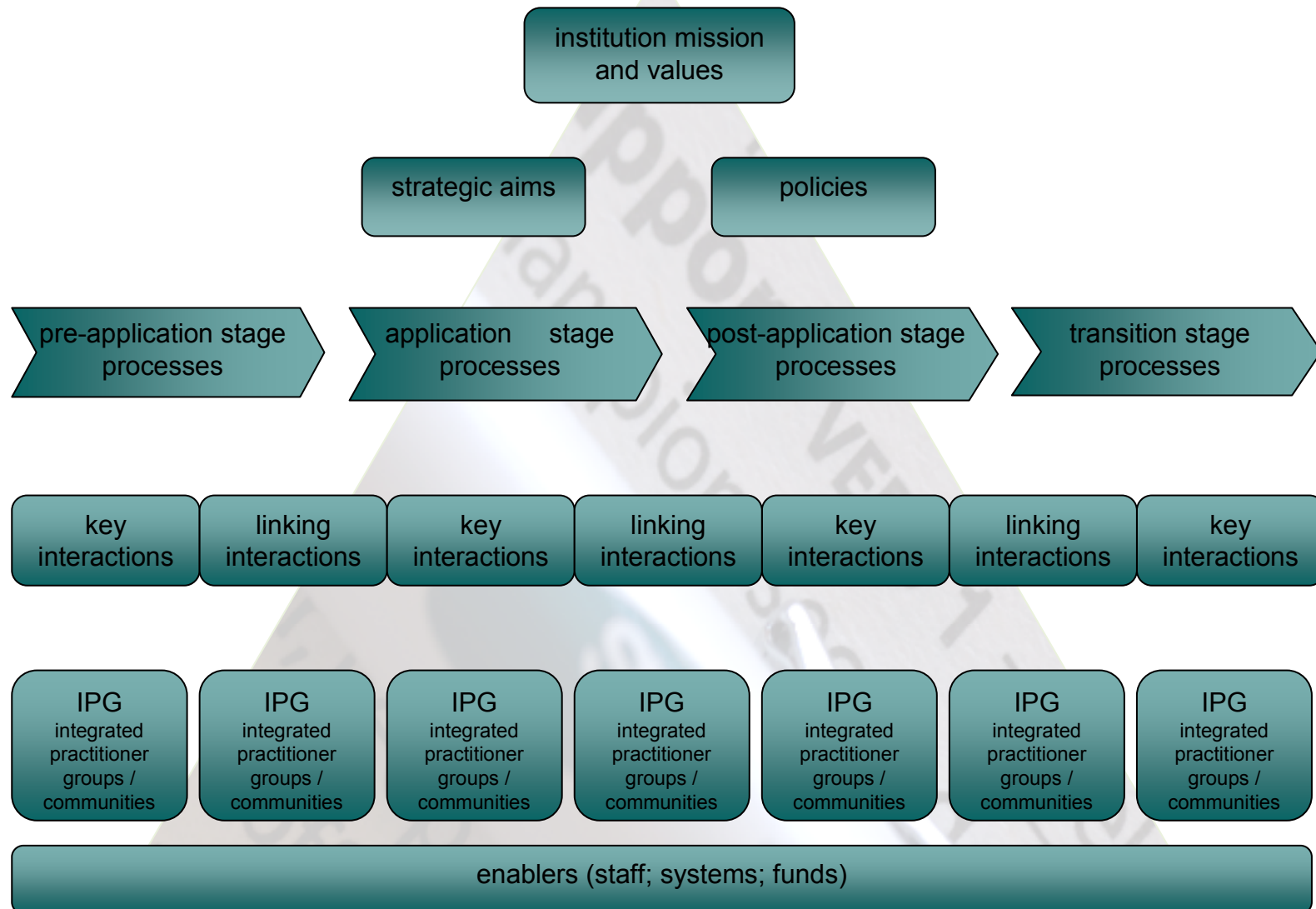


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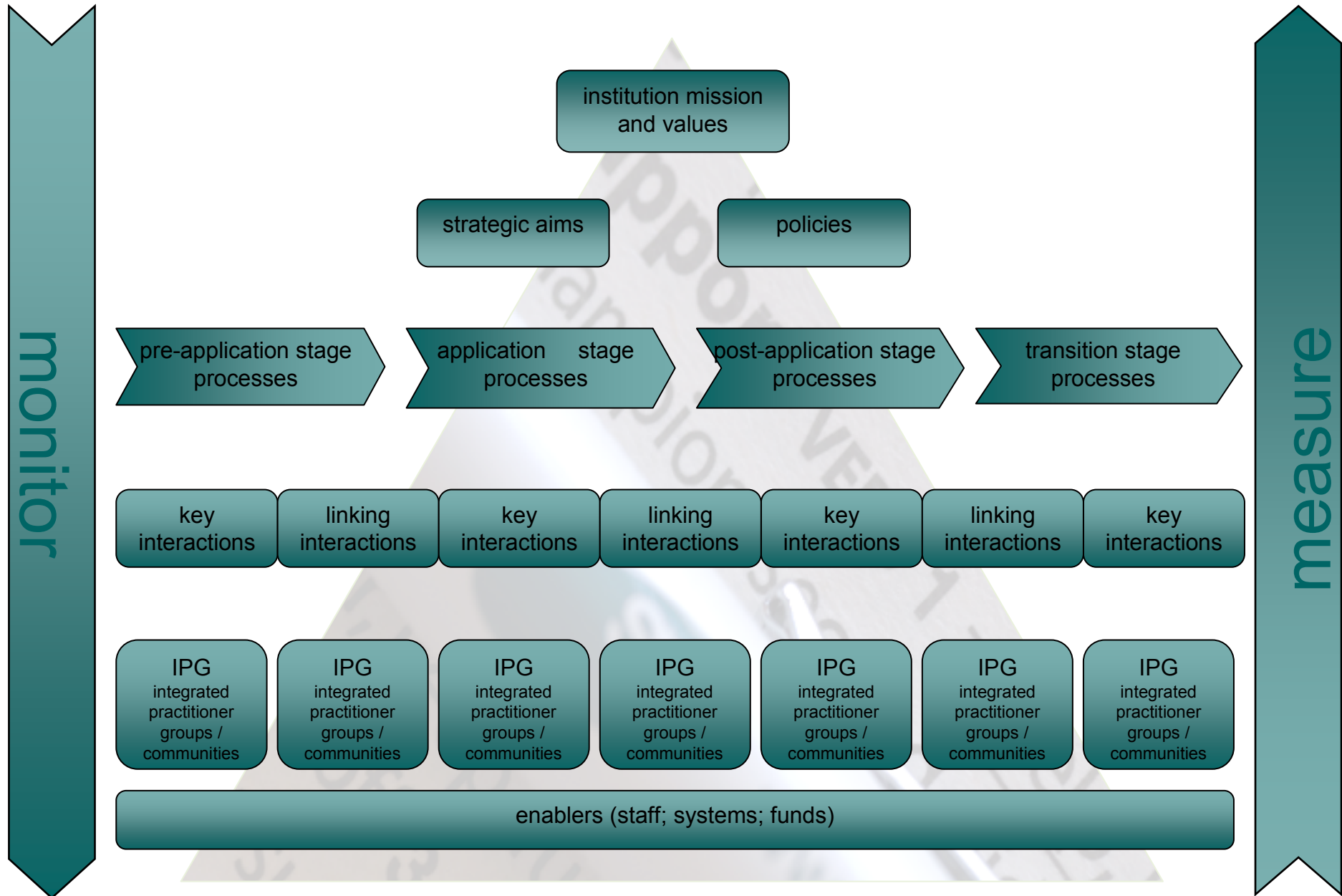




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**Thank you**  
**Your feedback is welcomed**

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