

# Using Limiting Factors to Overcome the Problem of Long Time Horizons in Evaluation

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# The Challenge

Develop a practical basis for assessing whether a project is on track to achieve its goal

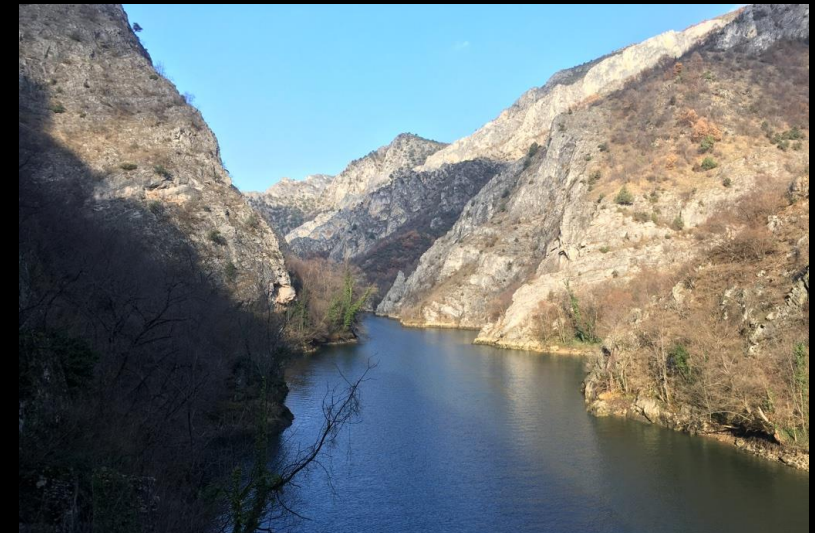


The problem: polluted water



Time to achieve goal: unknown

Duration of funding: finite



The goal: clean water

# Limiting Factors

What is preventing achievement of the goal?



Environmental Regulations  
Enforcement  
Funding  
Scientific Understanding



Institutional Capacity  
Economic Forces  
Stakeholder Coordination



# Program Design

Are there strategies to overcome each limiting factor?



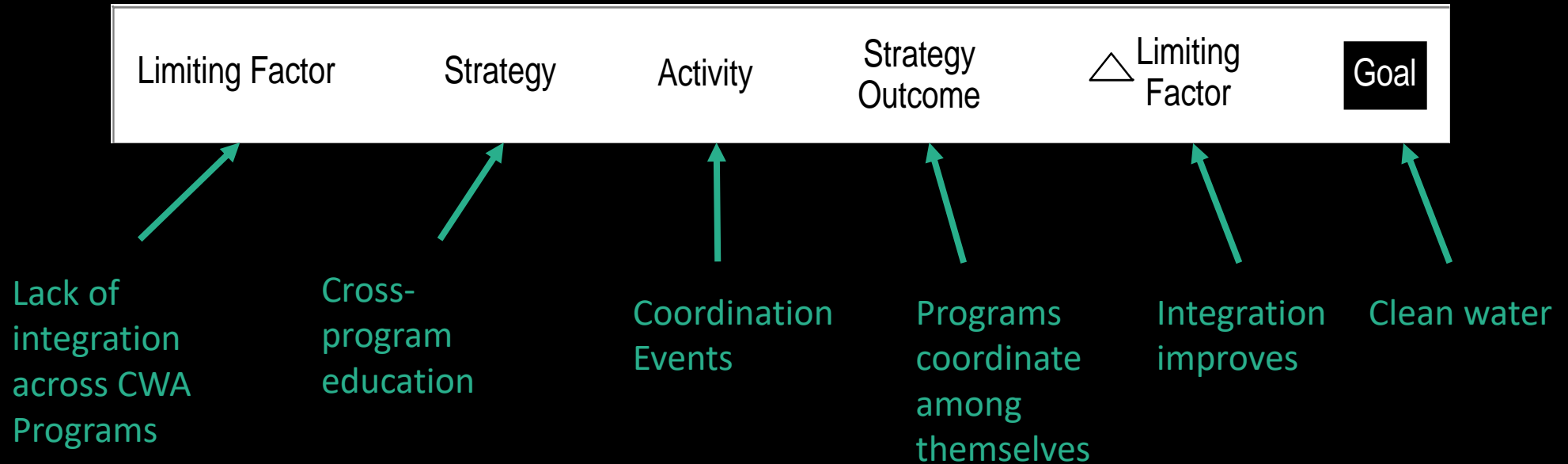
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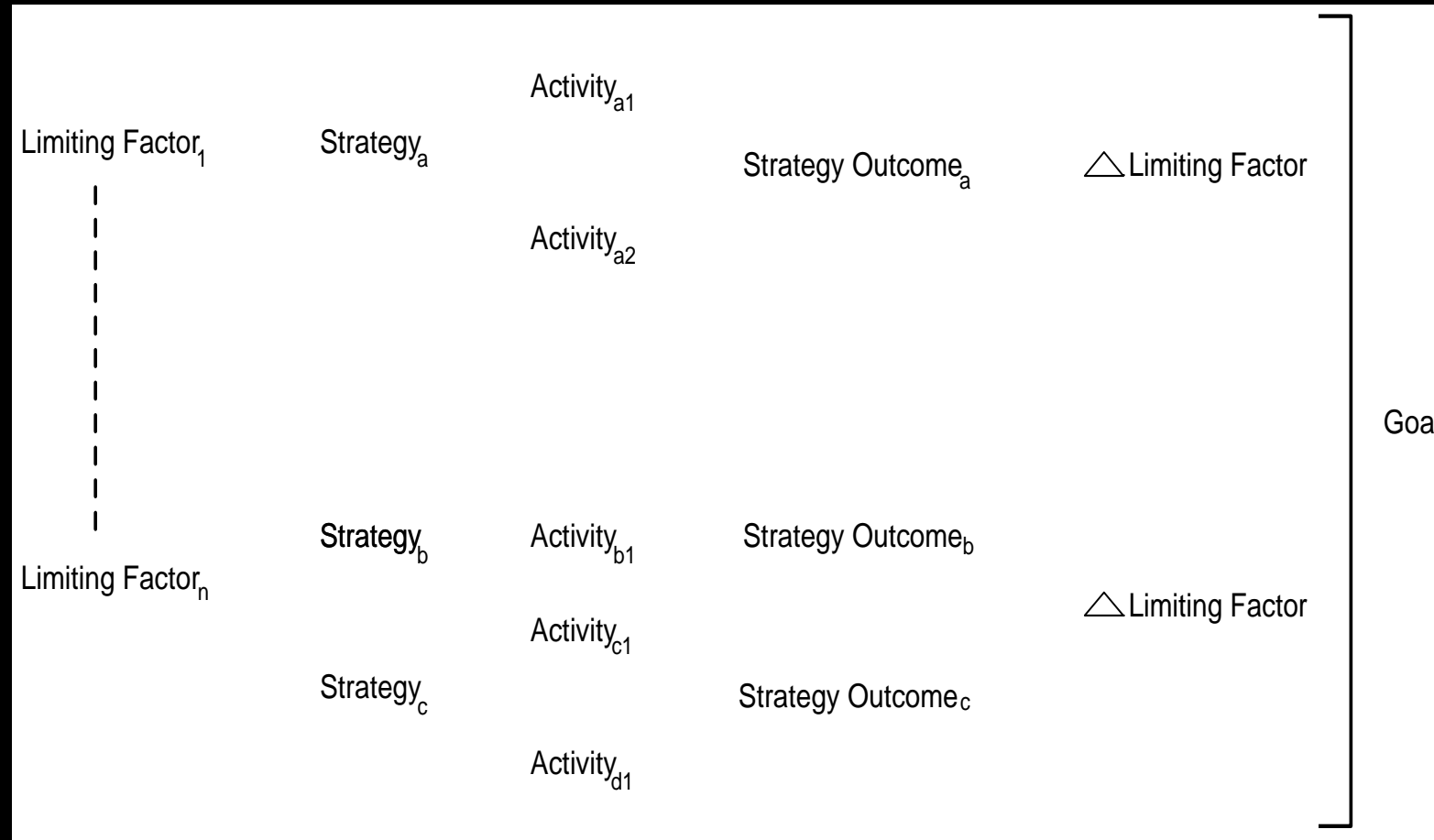
# What to Measure in Evaluation?



# Design for Evaluation

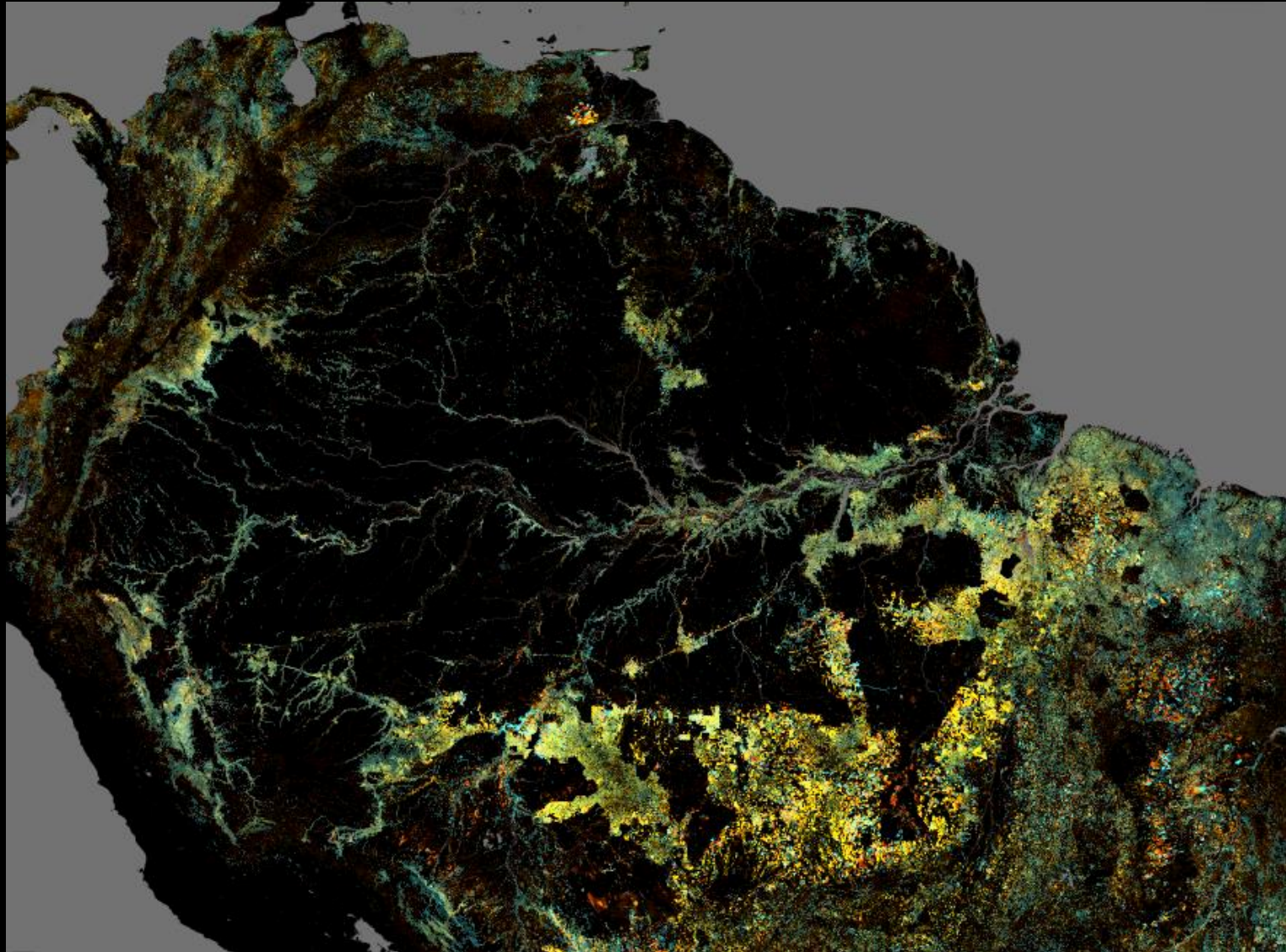
Lack of integration across CWA Programs

Sites not prioritized for intervention





## Example: Andes Amazon Initiative of the Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation

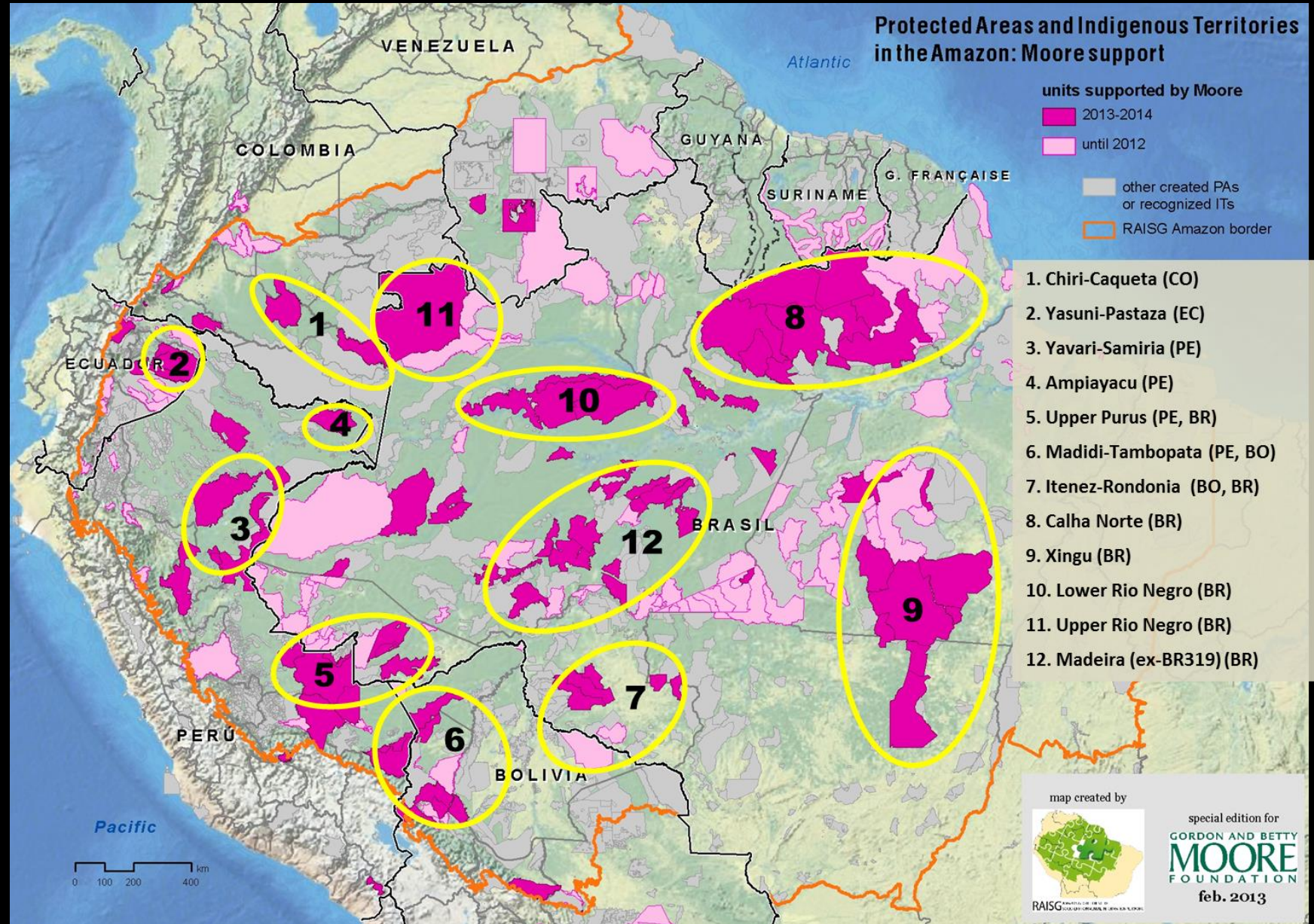


Source: <http://earthenginepartners.appspot.com/science-2013-global-forest>



Evaluation revealed:

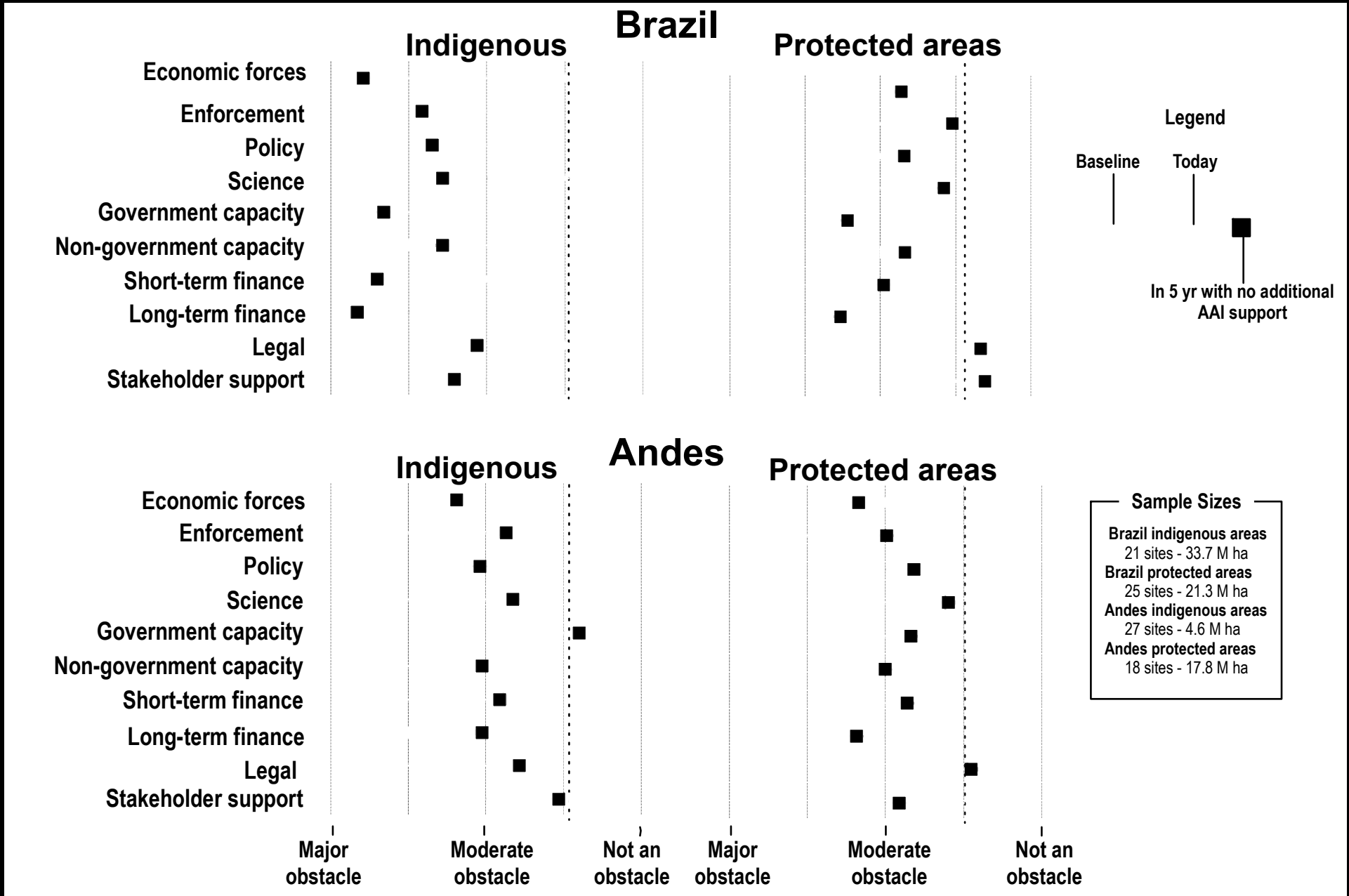
- 1) Grantees are successful in *establishing* new protected areas: 64M ha vs goal of 80M ha
- 1) Effectively *managing* those areas remains a challenge





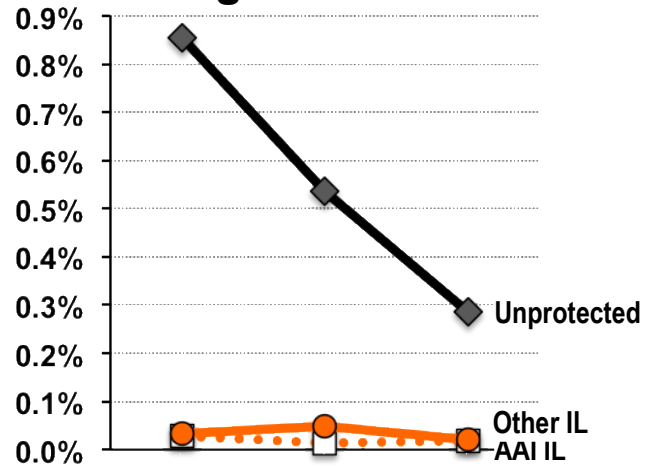
Evaluation revealed:

- 1) Grantees are achieving meaningful progress in management of areas
- 2) Chain is only as strong as its weakest link
- 3) Cannot assume gains are always durable

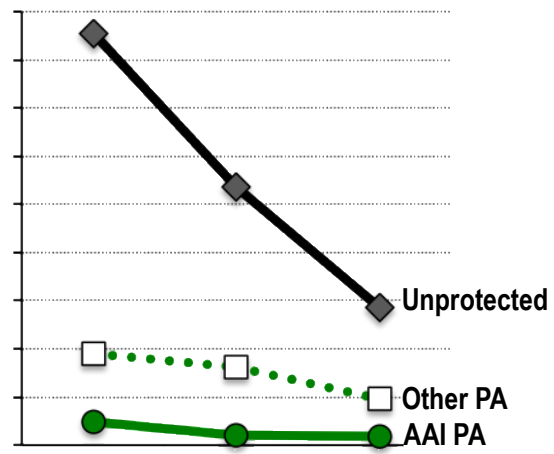


## Brazil

### Indigenous lands

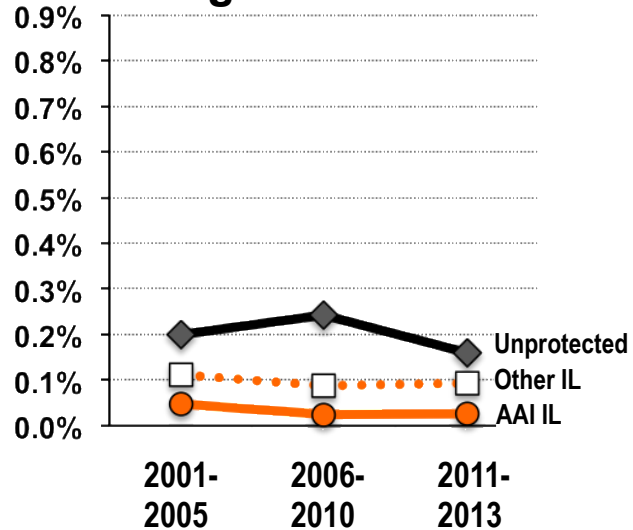


### Protected areas

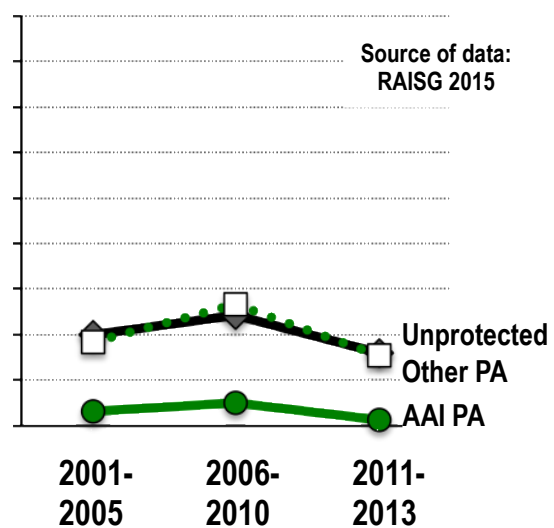


## Andes

### Indigenous lands



### Protected areas



Source of data:  
RAISG 2015

Time Period

Average Annual Deforestation Rate (%)

Evaluation revealed:

1) The program works:

- Addressing limiting factors generates outcomes on the ground

- Results are better than the counterfactuals

2) More work is needed

The result: Donor renewed and expanded the program for another 5 years

# Key Concepts to Carry Forward

Set a measurable goal

Figure out what is keeping you from achieving the goal – limiting factors

Develop *necessary and sufficient* strategies to overcome the limiting factors

Measure interim outcomes of those strategies

Measure the extent that limiting factors are reduced/overcome

Whenever possible, quantify achievement of goal



# Follow Up

Gullison, R.E. and J. Hardner. 2009. Using limiting factors analysis to overcome the problem of long time horizons when evaluating biodiversity conservation projects. *New Directions in Evaluation* no. 122: 19-29.

Gullison, R.E., J. Hardner. 2018. Progress and challenges in consolidating the management of Amazonian protected areas and indigenous territories. *Conservation Biology*: Vol 0, No. 0, 1-11.

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